

# MILITARY

## ILLUSTRATED

## PAST & PRESENT

No.60

MAY 1993

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**14th CENTURY CAVALRY WARFARE**

**US MEDICAL CORPS, 1857-87**

**PANZERGRENADIER DIVISION**

**'GROSSDEUTSCHLAND'**



# MILITARY ILLUSTRATED

□ PAST & PRESENT □

No. 60

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### Editor:

**Bruce Quarrie**  
36 Garnet Lane, Wellingborough,  
Northants NN8 4NW  
(tel & fax: 0933-675669)

**Editorial design** by  
Kate Hardie and Cathy Triggs

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Konrad Kochanski  
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## BATTLEFIELDS TRUST

The Battlefields Trust — which has now received confirmation of its status as a registered charity — is holding its third annual conference at the University of York from Friday evening, 6 August, to Sunday afternoon, 8 August. The Saturday events will include a wide range of lectures and seminars, with a banquet-style meal in the evening. On Sunday there will be tours of Towton and Marston Moor. The cost, including accommodation, meals, lectures and tours, is £180; for those only able to attend the Saturday programme (9am-7.30pm) the cost is £90. Membership of the Trust costs just £10 a year and is a contribution to a cause which this magazine wholeheartedly supports. For details of membership and/or the conference, contact Michael Rayner, 98 Freedom Road, Walkley, Sheffield S6 2XD; tel 0742 342091.

## BROADSWORD '93

The Loughton Strike Force Wargames Club are holding their annual 'Broadsword' event on 29 August at Loughton Hall, Rectory Lane, Loughton, Essex (close to

# EDITOR'S NOTES

the M11/M25, or Debden station — Central Line). The show is open from 10am to 5pm and will feature trade stands, 15 wargames, painting competitions and a bring & buy stall. Admission is 80p. For further information contact Kevin Brazier, 3 The Mile End, Walthamstow, London E17 5QE.

## SOMME 1916

The County & Regimental Museum, Preston, Lancs, has just opened a new exhibition which will run until 4 January 1994. It is open every day except Thursdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays from 10am to 5pm, and admission costs £1 (children free). Apart from photographs and other exhibits, you can see the original film 'Battle of the Somme'.

## HOLT'S TOURS

Major & Mrs Holt's Battlefield Tours — sponsors of our recent Normandy Tour competition — have devised a special programme of events for the 50th anniversary of the crucial 1944 battles. These

are as follows. The D-Day tours themselves last either four or six days (4 June to either the 7th or the 9th); then there is the International Air Tattoo D-Day Air Show (4-5 June); Tilly-Villers Bocage (16-19 June); Caen-Goodwood (7-10 July); Operation Epsom/Hill 112 (21-24 July); The Falaise Gap (18-21 August); additionally, there is a Monte Cassino tour (11-18 May) and a Northern Italy tour (3-10 September); plus two Arnhem tours: the Club Route (13-19 September) which follows the route of XXX Corps' advance from Normandy to Eindhoven; and Operation Market Garden (16-19 September) which takes you to Nijmegen and Arnhem. Prices range from £234-£600. For details, write to Major & Mrs Holt's Battlefield Tours Ltd, 15 Market Street, Sandwich, Kent CT13 9DA; tel 0304 612248.

## BRITAIN'S CENTENARY

This year marks the centenary of William Britain's first metal hollow cast soldier and inevitably — quite apart from a move into a

new factory — the firm is issuing four special commemorative sets: the 13th Hussars, Royal Fusiliers, Fort Henry Guard Pioneer and 1837 Life Guard, and Gun Team of the King's Troop of the Royal Horse Artillery. Additionally, there are two limited edition sets — drummers and mascot handlers of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, and the Band of the Blues and Royals. In their 'normal' toy soldier range, this year's additions are the 5th (Princess Charlotte of Wales's) Dragoon Guards, and the King's Royal Rifle Corps. Finally, Military Book Society editor and BMSS expert on Britain's soldiers James Opie has written a book to be published in October, *The Great Book of Britains*, and will be writing an article for *MI* about the company and its products. For those readers who might not know, the firm runs a Collectors' Club which produces a quarterly journal and one special figure each year which is exclusive to members. For details, send an A4 SAE to: The William Britain Collectors' Club, PO Box 1946, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 3TS.

Bruce Quarrie

## At the cinema

### Sniper (Entertainment: 15)

POST-NORIEGA Panama provides the setting for Luis Llosa's *Sniper* (1992). US government agent and expert marksman Richard Miller (Billy Zane) joins legendary Marine sniper Tom Beckett (Tom Berenger) on a mission to assassinate a rebel general who is threatening to overthrow the country. There is tension between the two from the start; Beckett is embittered about the death of his former partner in an earlier operation due to a botched helicopter extraction, and resents the fact that civilian Miller outranks him. Miller lacks jungle experience, has not killed before and doubts if he can. The mission takes them deep into the Panamanian jungle: the presence of a Colombian drugs baron, who is financing the rebels, and an ex-CIA agent turned mercenary provide 'targets of opportunity', but they are themselves being stalked by a rebel sniper...

Berenger and Zane were prepared for their roles under the supervision of Dale Dye, a retired Marine captain and former sniper who received three Purple Hearts for wounds sustained in battle. Costume designer Ray Summers based their costumes on an authentic sniper's ghillie suit, a poncho-like garment made of camouflage burlap coloured appropriately to the terrain. Attached to this is netting, twigs and foliage thus making the wearer indistinguishable from the jungle.

Imaginative camerawork and special effects convey the sniper's view through his telescopic sight, and the flight of a bullet towards its

target. Most of the film was shot in the vicinity of Port Douglas in Northern Queensland, Australia. The drugs baron character is symptomatic of Hollywood's recent interest (since the fall of Communism) in this threat, superficially explored in *Wings of the Apache* (1990), *Delta Force II — The Colombian Connection* (1990) and *Aces — Iron Eagle III* (1991).

Michael Frost Beckner wrote the script before the American invasion of Panama in order to utilise a more politically neutral setting suitable for an psychological investigation of sniping. The script hints at the qualities required of a sniper; mental discipline, and the ability to withstand loneliness and physical discomfort. In one scene the pair sleep almost fully submerged in a stagnant malaria-infested jungle pool. Their psychological state is mirrored by the photography of the jungle, which becomes oppressively darker as they approach their goal. Unfortunately, such interesting insights become secondary to the emphasis on the hostility between the pair. However, the film avoids the Ramboesque excesses to which it could so easily have descended.

### Video releases to rent:

#### The Finest Hour (20.20 Vision: 15)

Shimon Dotan's *The Finest Hour* (1992) is one of the first films to be made set during the Gulf War (1990/91). It concerns two new recruits to the US Navy SEALs, Hammer (Rob Lowe) and Dean

(Gale Hansen), who meet at the Basic Underwater Demolitions School (BUDS) at San Diego, California. Their initial mutual dislike turns to friendly rivalry during the gruelling training period which they both, unlike many, survive. However, their friendship becomes strained when Hammer impulsively marries marine biologist Barbara (Tracy Griffith), a girl to whom Dean is also attracted. As a result, Dean decides to take his Swimmer Delivery Vehicle (SDV) mini-sub training at Portsmouth, Virginia.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait brings about Operation Desert Shield. SEAL units are deployed to track the movements of Scud missile launchers and plant surveillance devices along the Euphrates river. Hammer and fellow SEAL Bosco (Ed Lottimer) are sent to gather information concerning Iraqi activity on an island in the Straits of Hormuz commanding the entrance to the Gulf. They are spotted by an Iraqi patrol, which captures Bosco. However, Hammer's photographs prove the island is a base for missiles with deadly chemical warheads.

Hammer and Dean go on a mission to obtain further information in preparation for a raid on the island. They rescue Bosco, but Hammer is hospitalised as a result of Hammer's infidelities. Hammer forges hospital release papers in order to accompany a concerted raid to destroy the missile base.

Producer Menahem Golan, formerly one of the first pilots in the

Israeli Air Force, initiated the *Missing in Action* and *Delta Force* series. This film repeats the all-too-familiar combination of male bonding and thick-ear action. Some interest is afforded by the use of the SDV mini-sub and other SEAL equipment, some of which would not seem out of place in a James Bond movie. Those who enjoyed Lewis Teague's similarly undemanding *Navy Seals* (1990) (reviewed *M/51*) will doubtless find some entertainment value here.

### Video releases to buy:

#### Hearts of Darkness (Target: 15)

Francis Ford Coppola's 1979 film *Apocalypse Now* transposed Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness* into the Vietnam war. The film's notoriety, achieved even before its release, forms the subject of Fax Bahr and George Hickenlooper's fascinating documentary *Hearts of Darkness, A Filmmaker's Apocalypse* (1991). Much of the visual material, shot by Coppola's wife Eleanor, was originally intended as a promotional film for United Artists.

The film shows how Harvey Keitel, in the central role of Lieutenant Willard, was replaced by Martin Sheen after several weeks filming. Sheen narrowly escaped death from a heart attack, and evidently played some scenes under the influence of alcohol. Marlon Brando, who played Captain Kurtz, demanded a million dollars for each of three week's work, and threatened to withdraw when the shooting schedule was delayed. Expensive sets were demolished by torrential rain. The

# ON THE SCREEN



filming of the climactic helicopter attack on a coastal village was interrupted when the Philippine government re-appropriated the helicopters without warning for use against real guerrillas. Coppola halted filming to retreat to California and work out his 'personal vision' of the film.

Inevitably, the film's troubled production became compared to the Vietnam war itself. The analogy evidently didn't escape Coppola who said, 'My film is not about Vietnam. It is Vietnam. We were in the jungle. There were too many of us. We had access to too much money, and little by little we went insane.' The irony of Coppola making a film criticising a colonial exploit, but initiating one in the very process of making the film, has not escaped the makers of this documentary either.

### The Damned (Target: 18)

The following two releases examine the rise of Fascism between the wars in industrial Germany and rural Italy. Moreover, they were directed by two of Italy's most talented filmmakers and are considered classics of world cinema. Both are presented in their original widescreen versions.

Luchino Visconti's *The Damned* (*Gotterdammerung/La Caduta degli Dei* (1969) tells the story of the struggle for power within a powerful German steel manufacturing dynasty headed by Joachim Essenbeck. Sophie (Ingrid Thulin), widow of Joachim's eldest son, and her lover Friedrich Bruckman (Dirk Bogarde), form an alliance with Joachim's nephew Aschenbach, a member of the SS, to gain control of the company. They shoot Joachim and frame the anti-fascist ex-vice-

president Herbert, with the help of Martin (Helmut Griem), Joachim's heir, and make Friedrich president. Sophie and Friedrich successfully eliminate vice-president Konstantin, a member of the SA, but they have not realised the extent of Aschenbach's own ambitions...

The film begins on the night of the burning of the Reichstag and features transvestism, paedophilia, incest, the mass burning of university books, a drunken SA homosexual orgy, and the infamous Night of the Long Knives, which wiped out the SA leadership. Despite the subject matter, it is elegantly filmed and features a score by Maurice Jarre. This English language version lasts 156 minutes and includes footage cut at the time of its release.

### 1900 (Fox Video: 18)

Bernardo Bertolucci's 1900

(1976) concerns two boys born on the same day on an Italian estate at the turn of the century. Alfredo (Robert de Niro), the landowner's son, is spared involvement in the First World War, and reluctantly takes over the estate when his father dies. Olmo (Gerard Depardieu), the son of a poor tenant farmer, becomes involved in agricultural union activities. The estate manager Attila (Donald Sutherland) creates a local fascist blackshirt organisation, and organises the killing of those suspected of communist sympathies. These tensions reach a climax on Liberation Day in 1945.

Bertolucci's film benefits from an excellent international cast which also includes Burt Lancaster. It lasts some five hours and is presented, with English subtitles, in a two-tape set.

Stephen J. Greenhill

THE WINDS of change continue to blow gently through some of the arms and armour departments of the auction rooms. Sotheby's have now completed their removal of arms and armour sales from London to Billingshurst. It is planned to hold three sales a year at Billingshurst in April, July and December, but it is interesting to note that their next sale of sporting guns will be held in London. This important sale will feature guns from the Charles Lancaster collection and includes a number of very fine antique long arms as well as modern sporting guns. There are several of Lancaster's four-barrelled guns and a fine flintlock double-barrelled gun which was probably made as late as 1850 and was also used as a typical example of a flintlock when it was fired in some comparison test fires that *The Field* magazine ran in the 1880s.

There is also another double-barrelled flintlock sporting gun which almost certainly belonged to the Prince Regent and originally came from his home at Carlton House. It is of good quality and inlaid in the stock is a small gold three feather emblem which was the badge of the Prince of Wales. What appears interesting is that this interesting sale is to be held in London which, on the face of it, would seem to argue that London is still considered to be either a little more prestigious or a more convenient venue.

Judging by comments heard at the Park Lane Arms Fair, the Billingshurst move has not apparently been a popular move with either collectors or the trade. However, it is encouraging to hear the some good quality material has been coming in — a trend which it is to be hoped will continue. In the April sale there were some fine helmets and a very extensive collection of German medals and badges, both Imperial and Third Reich. All in all the 'new' Billingshurst sales promise to be a good ones.

One of the comments passed

was that viewing sales will now mean a much longer journey taking up more time. However, the buyers will go where they can find goods and even the smallest auction will attract the trade if there is a possibility of a bargain or even just some good stock.

It is also reported that Philip's popular expert, Allen, who deals with arms and armour, is now only at the London office for part of the week. Christies and Bonham's seem to be immune from the current cold draught but they may well benefit from the fact that material coming to the counter at the other rooms cannot be dealt with straight away. One of the unknown outcomes of all these changes must be how much trade will pass. Sotheby's and Philips by as they now have no permanent specialist department in New Bond Street. Clients generally like a speedy reaction to their enquiries so they may well try another room. To balance this view it must be said that there is less material appearing at

the counters in London although it seems that this might not be quite so true of the provincial rooms.

Christie's had a good sale of arms and armour on 31 March, the Eugen Nielsen collection which included several Japanese swords being expected to realise over £250,000. Sotheby's have a Marine sale in May which will include all items nautical including pictures, medals instruments and arms and armour.

The Tenth Park Lane Arms Fair took place on Sunday, 21 February, and although there seemed to be fewer exhibitors, visitors' attendance in the morning was up. Once again the power of TV was demonstrated because there had been a mention of this event in an arts programme on Channel Four a week or so beforehand and the auction rooms received a number of enquiries as to the venue. The auction rooms also have an increased in input after the Antiques Road Show has featured an object of arms and

armour or militaria. The most recent occasion was an Indian helmet which was discussed and a price put on it. To the public this figure applied to all similar objects and a few enquirers were disappointed when they were told that the price quoted was not typical of all such helmets.

Prices at the Fair, as always, were high but in general the rate of increase seems to have slowed down somewhat. One fact that was evident from the displays was that top quality reproduction armour is now more readily available. There were some first class examples to be seen on tables such as that of Legion XIII, which had some very attractive Roman and Greek helmets.

It was difficult to judge how much business was being carried on at the Fair but most of the dealers seemed more or less content. The next London Arms Fair at the end of April was the 50th and it looked as if that could mark a change in the market for there seems to be a general, if very cautious, feeling that things might just be beginning to look up a little.

Kent Sales had their January sale and report a greatly increased European bidding presence. Part of the reason must be the state of the money market with the pound falling against most other currencies. This means that in effect all UK prices have been reduced, making our sales appear quite reasonable. There was a definite increased interest in uniforms of World War II quite apart for the perennial demand for good Third Reich material. Quite mundane items of women's uniform had realised good prices.

The ever-active Sales Director reported that there had been a small amount of business dealing with edged weapons of the Third Reich. Whether this was an indication that interest was at last diminishing or just that the flow of material was beginning to dry up was not clear. Time alone will tell!

Frederick Wilkinson

## THE AUCTION SCENE

*Good helmets have realised good prices and this silver plated helmet of a Belgian Cuirassier's was no exception. Despite the fact that there is little romance or action associated with an item like this it still sold at £600. A Napoleonic example of a similar helmet would sell for a much higher figure.*





# Panzergrenadier Division 'Grossdeutschland'

GORDON WILLIAMSON

AFTER THE END of World War One, and the formation of the weak Weimar Republic, Germany found itself in political chaos. Political extremist groups abounded, and the capital, Berlin, was considered to be in great danger from potential uprisings. The tiny postwar Reichswehr founded, in 1921, the *Wachregiment Berlin*, based in the city, to keep order and assist the police if necessary. It was, however, frowned upon by the left-wing elements in the Reichstag, and was disbanded within a few months. In its place was formed a *Kommando der Wachtruppe*, and this command structure became responsible for a series of units which provided a Berlin Guard unit on a rotational basis.

The National Socialist Party, on coming to power in 1933, saw the benefits of a full time permanent guard unit for the capital and, in 1934, the *Wachtruppe Berlin* was formed. Originally consisting of seven companies, the *Wachtruppe* grew as did the new Wehrmacht, and was reorganised at regimental strength in 1936 as *Wachregiment Berlin*.

Although its components continued to be supplied from other units throughout Germany, the *Wachregiment* was fully responsible for discipline, promotional structure, etc. Much of the Regiment's duties consisted of ceremonial, as well as training. In order to distinguish themselves, soldiers of the Regiment wore a small gothic letter 'W' for *Wache* or Guard on the shoulder strap. The *Wachregiment* also took on responsibility for guarding the Reichs Chancellory.

In April 1939, the Oberbefehlshaber des Heers issued an order re-naming the Regiment as *Infanterie Regiment Grossdeutschland*. The title emphasised the fact that this élite Regiment did not have its recruiting restricted to one particular geographical area of the Reich, but was entitled to recruit from anywhere in greater Germany. Like its SS counterpart the *Leibstandarte*, this new Regiment had a very high selection standard so that only the very best recruits were admitted.

*Grossdeutschland* was still very much in the process of being formed and trained

AS THE 'Leibstandarte' was to the SS, so the 'Grossdeutschland' Regiment and later Division was to the Army — an élite fighting formation which, despite hideous casualties, maintained its morale and esprit de corps to the bitter end.



**Above:** Hauptmann Friedrich Anding of Panzerjäger Abteilung Grossdeutschland. Note the third pattern Sütterlinschrift cuffband, and the GD shoulder strap monograms. (Anding.)

**Below, Left to Right:** Shoulder strap for a Feldwebel of Wachregiment Berlin. Shoulder strap for a private in the Feldgendarmietrupp of Panzergrenadier Division 'GD' (orange piping and orange embroidered 'GD'). Shoulder strap for an Unterfeldwebel of 'Grossdeutschland 2'. Shoulder strap for a Leutnant of Pioniere with gilt metal 'GD'. (Author's collection.)

when war broke out and it therefore took no real part in the Polish Campaign. The newly formed Regiment, at about this time, received the first supplies of its cuffband. This was woven in aluminium thread on a dark green band with aluminium thread woven edging. The Title 'Grossdeutschland' was executed in gothic characters. A new shoulder strap monogram was also introduced bearing the entwined letters 'GD'.

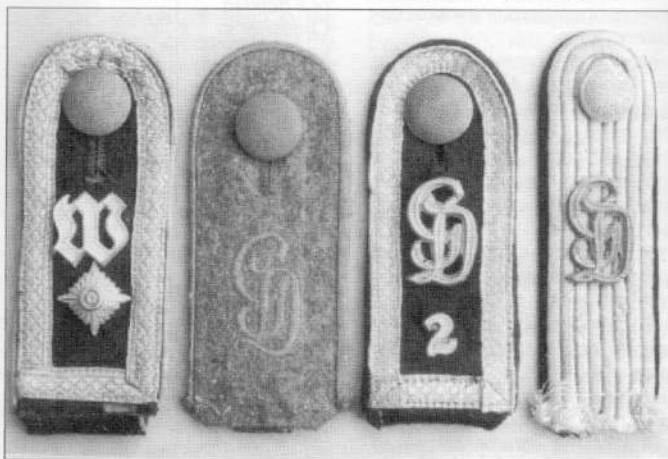
For some reason the troops did not take kindly to the new

cuffband, or more specifically, its colour. Regimental commander Oberst von Stockhausen is said to have complained 'Infanterie Regiment Grossdeutschland is no Feldpost unit!' This comment is rather strange as in fact the Army Field Postal Service was granted a black, not green cuffband. In any case, the cuffband was to be changed, its new form having the text 'Inf. Regt. Grossdeutschland'. However, the new pattern retained the silver on green colouring of its predecessor and was equally disliked.

*Grossdeutschland* did play a significant role in the attack in the West as part of XIX Armee under command of Panzer General Heinz Guderian. It took part in the successful assault over the River Maas and fought in the battle for Sedan. It helped in the breakthrough at the Maginot Line and drove on Dunkirk with von Kleist's Panzergruppe.

After the fall of France, *Grossdeutschland* underwent a period of rest and refitting in the Burgundy region, and was to have been used in Operation 'Sealion', the proposed invasion of Great Britain. Instead, the Regiment was moved eastward where it took part in the attack on Yugoslavia.

In June 1941, the now further reinforced Regiment was assigned to II Panzerarmee for the assault on the Soviet Union. From its launch point at Brest-Litovsk it attacked alongside 7 Panzer Division initially, but then found itself withdrawn and attached to numerous other units as circumstances demanded. *Grossdeutschland's* reputation as a fire brigade unit, rushing to wherever it was needed most, was already beginning. The





From top to bottom: Third pattern hand-embroidered aluminium wire Grossdeutschland cuffband. Fourth pattern cuffband in silver-grey machine-embroidered thread on black badgecloth. A further example of the third pattern Sütterlinschrift cuffband. An example of the fifth and final pattern cuffband in machine-embroidered copperplate script. (Author's collection.)



Regiment fought hard, and took serious casualties, but acquired a reputation for bravery and élan, and was one of the spearpoint units which reached to the outskirts of Moscow itself. In the spring of 1942, the unit was withdrawn from the front for reorganisation and upgrading to divisional status.

The new Infantry Division went back into action on the Eastern Front as part of Hitler's summer offensive and took part in the capture of over 100,000 Soviet prisoners at Kursk. It also took part in the drive south towards Stalingrad. Withdrawn to reserve status before the disaster at Stalingrad, it escaped the fate of VI Armee and went back into action in the defence of the central sector of the front. Here it was badly battered, losing somewhere between 10-12,000 men. Like most élite units, its reputation and status was won only at a considerable cost in lives. However, the esprit de corps and general morale of the survivors remained high.

The remnants of the Division were withdrawn from combat at the beginning of 1943 and were reformed as a Panzergrenadier Division, resulting in the acquisition of much needed armour in the form of half-tracks for the infantry, and a unit of Tiger tanks for the Panzer

Regiment.

Thrown into action again, it spent the early part of 1943 in action around Belgorod and Kharkov along with SS Panzer units, before being withdrawn for a period of rest prior to being committed to the great Panzer battle at Kursk. The Division fought well but was forced on to the retreat after the collapse of the offensive and ended the year at Kirovograd in the southern sector of the front.

The year 1944 was a nightmare for *Grossdeutschland*. Its reputation became a double-edged sword. Certainly morale at being a member of such an élite unit was high, but its reputation meant that the high command would not release it for rest and recuperation, it was always desperately needed somewhere on the front.

Cherkassy, Targul Frumos, Podul, Doblen, Stauliai, Goldap, Gumbinnen — all were ferocious battles in which *Grossdeutschland's* gallantry and determination under the worst possible conditions and against incredible odds became almost legendary. Only one Panzer Regiment 'GD', temporarily in the West to refit with the Panther tank, avoided action in the East, but was instead drawn into the fighting in Normandy.

The new year of 1945 saw *Grossdeutschland* retreating towards Königsberg in East

Prussia, where it fought tenaciously against the advancing Soviets. Eventually, its remnants were evacuated by sea to Schleswig Holstein where they ended the war.

In the last few hectic months,

Unteroffizier Hans Röger, of Panzer Füsilier Regiment 'GD', moments after the award of the Knights Cross. Note the embroidered 'GD' monograms on the coloured cloth strip. (Röger.)







A fine portrait study of Oberwachtmeister Wilhelm Wegner of the Sturmgeschützabteilung. Note the white-metal NCO's 'GD' monograms on the shoulder strap. The Sütterlinschrift cuffband is just visible. (Wegner.)

many of *Grossdeutschland's* satellite units were rapidly expanded to, at least on paper, divisional status in their own right. *Grossdeutschland* became more than just a division, it was now a Panzer Korps, consisting of *Grossdeutschland* proper, plus the *Führer Grenadier Division*, *Führer Begleit Division*, *Brandenburg*, *Panzer Grenadier Division Kurmark*, and even the *Luftwaffe's Hermann Göring Division*.

The Korps never really fought as a single entity, many of its sub units being scattered all over the front. The *Führer Grenadier Division* surrendered to the Americans but was turned over to the Soviets and most of its men died in captivity. *Brandenburg Division* sur-

rendered to the Soviets. *Kurmark* and *Führer-Begleit* surrendered to the Americans and remained in US captivity. The Guard Regiment from *Grossdeutschland* which remained in Berlin was decimated during the battle for the city in 1945.

#### THE INSIGNIA

As already described, *Wachregiment Berlin* wore a special distinguishing letter 'W' for *Wache* on the shoulder strap. For ranks up to Unteroffizier, this letter was machine-embroidered into the strap. For other NCO grades, it was in white metal and for officers in gilt metal.

When the renaming took place in 1939, a new cypher

was introduced with the initial letters G and D, the D being superimposed over the G. It was embroidered directly into the strap for ranks up to Unteroffizier, in white metal for other NCOs, and gilt metal for officers. Initially, the cypher was embroidered in the same colour as the *waffenfarbe* in which the strap was piped, but later, silver-grey embroidery was used on all straps.

When *Grossdeutschland* was expanded to divisional status, it found itself with two Infantry Regiments which were numbered GD1 and GD2. Although at least one example of a shoulder strap with a small number 2 embroidered beneath the GD monogram is known, it is not known

whether these actually saw widespread use. However, the author has recently obtained an original wartime photograph showing a Gefreiter from GD2 wearing this very strap.

Subsequently, these Regiments were retitled *Grenadier Regiment Grossdeutschland* and *Fusilier Regiment Grossdeutschland* respectively. They were then distinguished by a small band of cloth across the base of the shoulder strap, red for the Grenadier Regiment and green for the Fusilier Regiment.

The most important identifying insignia of the *Grossdeutschland* units was, of course, the cuffband. Five distinct patterns were introduced as follows.

**1939** The first pattern was introduced in September 1939 and consisted of a machine-woven dark green cloth band 3.2cm wide with the legend 'Grossdeutschland' woven into it in aluminium wire gothic script characters. Woven aluminium wire edging was also featured.

**1940 (1)** In May 1940 a new pattern was introduced, identical in construction to the first pattern but with the legend expanded to read 'Inf. Regt. Grossdeutschland'. Both were unpopular and were rapidly replaced by the third pattern which was to be worn throughout the remainder of the war.

**1940 (2)** In October 1940, a new pattern appeared. Of superb quality, it featured a fine black doeskin or camel-hair type wool base, onto which the legend 'Grossdeutschland' was hand embroidered in fine aluminium wire. The edges consisted of strips of 'Russia Braid' top and bottom. The script pattern used was 'Sütterlinschrift', a traditional Germanic script difficult to read for anyone unaccustomed to it. This pattern was worn by *all* ranks from private up, and was not, as often stated, an officers' pattern.

**1944 (1)** Some time in mid-1944, for economic reasons, cuffbands began to be manufactured in machine embroidery. The *Grossdeutschland* band was no exception, and in its new form, although identical in design, it was manufac-



tured in silver-grey embroidered thread in a black badge-cloth band of coarser quality than its predecessor. This again was an all ranks' pattern worn by officers also, and not as often stated, an Other Ranks' pattern.

**1944 (2)** A final pattern was introduced around October 1944. It retained the same silver-grey machine embroidery on badgecloth construction as the previous pattern, but had the text changed to resemble fine copperplate handwriting script. This version was also an all ranks' pattern.

Notwithstanding this, some examples of the final pattern have appeared in hand-embroidered wire. However, these would be privately pur-

A rare photograph of a Gefreiter from Regiment 'GD2' wearing the shoulder strap with embroidered monogram and number. (Author's collection.)

chased samples and not official issue.

The last two patterns never replaced cuffbands already in wear and both Sütterlin patterns and the copperplate pattern were worn for the last few months of the war.

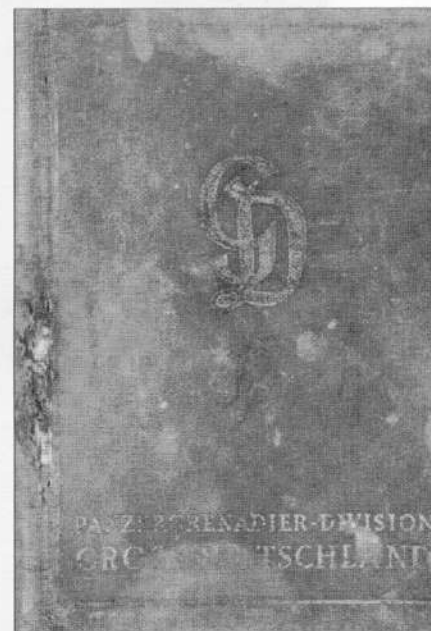
As well as these official insignia, the collectors may of course come across other material related to Grossdeutschland units. Award documents, photographs, Soldbuchs and Wehrpasses are all highly collectable. **MI**



**Top left:** Soldbuch entry under Section C, showing service with I/Pz.Gren. Regt. F.B.D. (Führer Begleit Division). Recorded items to this unit are exceptionally rare. (Author's collection.)

**Centre left:** Soldbuch page showing personal details and description of the holder. Note the two rubber stamps markings for III E.u.A. Bt1. Pz.Gren.Ers.Rgt. Grossdeutschland. This refers to 3rd Ersatz und Ausbildungs Bataillon, Panzer Grenadier Ersatz Regiment Grossdeutschland. This was the 3rd Training and Replacement Battalion of the Grossdeutschland's Replacement Regiment. In other words, the reserve pool to which soldiers were posted before being allocated to a specific unit. This soldier was posted to a Grenadier Company and was later killed in action at the age of just 18. (Author's collection.)

**Bottom left:** Soldbuch entries for a Jäger in a Brandenburg unit. This particular soldier was wounded in action and hospitalised, only to die of his wounds a few days after the war's end. (Author's collection.)



An original example of a pocket diary for members of 'GD'. The cover is dull brick red with the 'GD' monogram and title 'Panzer Grenadier-Division Grossdeutschland' embossed in gold. (Author's collection.)

A. Zuletzt zugehörige Wehrangehörigenliste:		
n. Zum Selbstbestimmung (nom.):		
Eintragungsnummer	Eintragungsnummer	Eintragungsnummer
a. 1. Eintragungsnummer	b. 2. Eintragungsnummer	c. 3. Eintragungsnummer
d. 4. Eintragungsnummer	e. 5. Eintragungsnummer	f. 6. Eintragungsnummer
C. Dienstverhältnis:		
a. 1. Dienstverhältnis	b. 2. Dienstverhältnis	c. 3. Dienstverhältnis
d. 4. Dienstverhältnis	e. 5. Dienstverhältnis	f. 6. Dienstverhältnis
D. Dienstverhältnis (Eintragungsnummer):		
E. Dienstverhältnis (Eintragungsnummer):		

A. Zuletzt zugehörige Wehrangehörigenliste:		
n. Zum Selbstbestimmung (nom.):		
Eintragungsnummer	Eintragungsnummer	Eintragungsnummer
a. 1. Eintragungsnummer	b. 2. Eintragungsnummer	c. 3. Eintragungsnummer
d. 4. Eintragungsnummer	e. 5. Eintragungsnummer	f. 6. Eintragungsnummer
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# The 95th (Rifle) Regiment of Foot

THIS IS THE first in a series of articles covering the Napoleonic Association's re-created 95th (Rifle) Regiment of Foot, a fairly small group of Napoleonic enthusiasts well noted for their discipline and authenticity of re-created uniforms, kit and equipment. For example, the rifles used by the group are individually hand crafted, each one taking well over six months to manufacture. As the Baker rifle is not on the production lists of the large commercial makers of period weapons, such as the British Brown Bess or Tower Musket and the French Charleville, the Baker rifle has had to be put together by members of the group themselves. This was achieved by first stripping down an original. Copies were then made in wood for the stock and butt, the brass parts were sand casted from moulds of the original parts, and painstakingly filed and polished. Finally, proof barrels were bought in, as were the steel ramrod and lock mechanisms needed to complete the task of reproducing the famed Baker rifles.

To begin with we will consider the development of the concept of the light infantryman and other light troops who, at the time of their arrival on the battlefield of continental Europe in the early 1740s, were thought to have brought about a major revolution in the military tactics of the time. We will then go on to consider the development in the British Army of the élite of all light troops, who were themselves also considered as something special, the 95th (Rifle) Regiment of Foot.

In the second part of the article we will take a detailed look at the famous Baker rifle itself, and consider the weapon from a technical point of view, its construction, performance, advantages and disadvantages, the loading and firing, the types of position that the rifleman would adopt when firing, and finally we will examine the equipment of the rifleman himself.

The history and development of rifled weapons seems to walk hand in hand with the history and development of light infantry tactics to which the rifle was to lend itself perfectly. It seems to have been

NEIL LEONARD

WITH THE ARRIVAL of Richard Sharpe and Patrick Harper on our television screens this month, it seems appropriate to examine the origins of this famous regiment and others which would constitute the equally famous Light Division.



*Charles Hamilton Smith's portrayal of a rifleman of the 95th and rifleman of the 60th Regiment; note the red facings on the soldier of the 60th.*

made especially for the war of the outposts, or *petite guerre* as it was sometimes known.

The development or concept of the rifle is thought to have evolved from a particular practice that many marksmen and hunters once employed; that of biting or chewing the rounded lead musket balls before ramming them down the barrels of their smoothbore hunting or fowling pieces. This practice was said to have a twofold effect: the first was to ensure that a wound made by such a ball, chewed or bitten in this manner, was sure to be much more severe than that from a mere spherical ball, giving a greater possibility of a kill. The second effect of this method, so it was claimed, was to make the ball spin through the air. This was thought to be caused by the effect of the air as it caught the irregular surface of the ball as the projectile forced its way through the barrel of the piece. It was said to make the

hunter's aim more true and increase the likelihood of hitting the target or prey.

The spinning effect of the ball and its tendency to make the hunter's aim more true was finally harnessed by the development of crude channels cut in the barrels of sporting and hunting guns. These channels were finally spiralled, this practice was the forerunner of the military rifle, although its use was initially confined to sporting or hunting weapons. Its use with the military was slowly realised, especially so with the British Army.

Rifling had the effect of increasing a gun's range and accuracy, but made it very slow to load. A smoothbore musket could fire three rounds in the space of one from a rifle which, with the very tight fitting of the ball and greased patch, often needed a small hammer or mallet to ram home. This reason, and the fact that rifle barrelled guns were

more expensive than their smoothbore counterparts, were probably why the major European powers were slow to adopt them. It is believed that the rifle first made its appearance in the eastern or central parts of the European continent, and slowly spread west. Britain being far to the west, was slow to catch on and develop its own rifles while they were in common use throughout the rest of the continent.

The military tactics of the early and mid-18th century, when the rifle was first making its appearance, were entirely based on the concept of the mass volley fire of large lines of musket armed infantry, discharging their volley at a similar line of infantry, armed with the same weapons. Thus the musket was the ideal weapon for use against such large bodies of opposing troops presenting such a huge target. The musket's fairly rapid rate of fire, even if not as accurate as the rifle's, was well suited to this form of warfare and was usually sure to find a mark. However, things were about to change. With the development of the new tactics of the irregular or light arm, not only the infantry were to find new roles, but also the cavalry and even the artillery were to be affected by the war of the outposts. With the development of formalised light infantry tactics, and further technical achievements, such as breech loading which was to increase the efficiency of the rifle further, the end was in sight for the musket.

The development of light troops in Europe was to coincide with the death of Frederick William I of Prussia, and the coming to the throne of Frederick II (Frederick the Great) in 1740. His proclamation as King was to lead indirectly to some significant developments in light infantry tactics. The death of the Habsburg Emperor Charles VI in that very same year, and the wrangle over the succession of his daughter Maria Theresa to the throne of the Holy Roman Empire, sparked off the first and

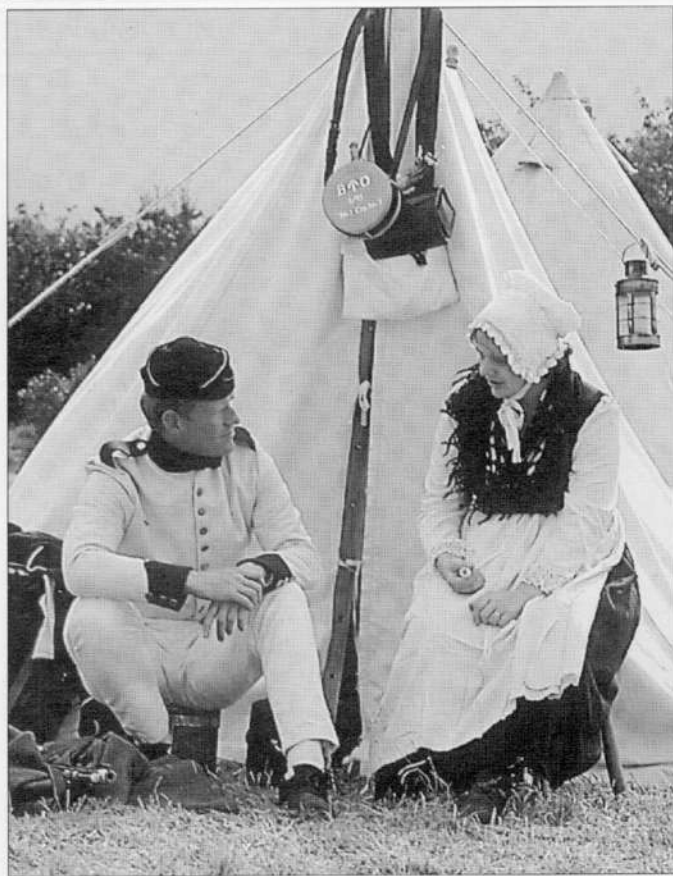
## Opposite:

*A sergeant plunders a fallen Frenchman, while a rifleman takes aim, and a second rifleman loads in the kneeling position.*









Front view of the undress uniform of the 95th Regiment, consisting of white breeches, off-white undress tunic and black undress cap piped in white with a white metal '95' on the front.

second Silesian Wars — which are often grouped together and known as the Wars of the Austrian Succession — in which Frederick attempted to seize Austrian Silesia for Prussia.

At first Frederick's Silesian campaign went very well, his highly trained and superbly drilled Prussians sweeping aside all resistance before them, encountering little or no opposition. Losses were minimal and Silesia soon fell into his hands, apart from some garrison towns which still kept up a stubborn resistance. By the end of January 1741, the vast majority of Austrian Silesia was under Prussian control, at which point a further threat appeared on Austria's borders with the French and Bavarian armies massing their forces for a share of the spoils, via an invasion of Bohemia. Things were indeed going well for Frederick.

However, the Austrians soon started to infiltrate the lines of communication and the rear of the Prussian armies with masses of irregular infantry and cavalry formations. They occupied roads, woods, villages, hilly

and rough areas of terrain, the natural choice of the guerrilla or irregular. These partisan irregulars were to completely disrupt the rest of Frederick's campaign, by attacking small garrisons, ambushing convoys and supply trains and cutting off small detachments; they seemed to be able to strike at will and with great effect.

These troops were the Croat Pandors and Hungarian Magyar irregulars from the fringes of the huge Austrian empire. They were ruthless and merciless, grossly ill-disciplined and would massacre all who fell into their hands; even women and wounded soldiers were not spared... They were, however, the eyes and ears of the Austrian army, and would report every movement that the Prussians were to make. Whole garrisons could be tied down for weeks, every move the Prussians made, concentrations of troops, supplies, the movement of artillery pieces, cavalry, and infantry were all known to the Austrians. And as the Austrian regular field army made its preparations to re-enter Silesia, the irregulars were to cover the advance so successfully that the Prussians were completely ignorant of it when the attack finally came.

The 1st, 2nd and 3rd Silesian wars (the 3rd more commonly known as the Seven Years' War), were to see the first adoption of the new light tac-

tics, not only for the infantry, but also for the cavalry in the form of the Hussar, and for the artillery in the form of the new flying batteries or galloping guns. Light tactics were really nothing new, they were known to the Romans, but in an age when the musket and steady line of infantry dominated the battlefield, they were a significant redevelopment of old tactics in a new age, and caused a complete revolution in terms of military thinking. Soon all the major European powers were to develop their own light troops in all their forms, to which the rifle with its greater accuracy and range was to be ideally suited.

The development of the British light infantry arm seems to have been a fairly slow process, with a good start having been made in the French and Indian wars in the American colonies, followed by a lapse, only to be re-started again in the American War of Independence, followed by yet another period of underdevelopment until a final revival at the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars with France. By this time it had been perceived that Britain was severely retarded in terms of a light infantry arm, compared to the French, who had used their chasseurs and tirailleurs to great effect in the campaigns in the Low Countries of the 1790s.

While the British had largely forgotten the invaluable lessons of the French and Indian wars and those of the War of Independence, the French, Prussians, Austrians

and the other European countries had not. They had raised large formations of light infantry units, in some cases exclusively recruited from the ranks of hunters, gamekeepers, foresters and marksmen who were already expert shots. They wore the dark shades of the forest, the greens, greys and black colours which were to be an early form of camouflage. Used to communicating over long distances, over broken and wooded terrain, they used the hunting horn not only for the swift transmission of orders to a scattered formation, but also as a symbol and badge of the light infantry, an emblem which is still used to this day.

During the wars in the American colonies the British did use light infantry tactics to great effect, particularly with famous formations of light troops such as Colonel Robert Rogers' Rangers, skilled backwoodsmen who could fight the French and Indians on their own terms, acting as irregular scouts and excellent light infantrymen. At the close of the

Another Charles Hamilton Smith portrait of King's German Legion troops. The central figure is from a line company rather than a sharpshooter company, which we can tell from the fact that he carries a Brown Bess and socket bayonet rather than a Baker rifle and sword bayonet. All centre companies of the two KGL battalions were clad as riflemen, but only the sharpshooter companies were armed with rifles.





1750s specially trained light companies were added to each battalion of line infantry, but this practice seems to have been largely discontinued by the close of the Seven Years' War in 1763.

With the coming of the American War of Independence in 1775, the neglect of the British light infantry was to result in a great shortage of trained light troops to meet the threat posed by the rebels. This shortage, however, was not to last as the army in the colonies quickly developed further regiments of Rangers and light infantry.

Highly skilled units of light infantry were developed during the war in the colonies but again, as at the end of the Seven Years' War, when Britain lost the war in America, the light arm was again left in a state of neglect. By the time of the French Revolutionary Wars of the 1790s, Britain was again left without an effective light infantry force. Although some units were officially termed 'light', the skills they had learned during the conflict in the colonies were no longer practised, so they were light infantry in name only.

The Duke of York, upon the retirement of Lord Amhurst in 1795, was appointed as Commander-in-Chief of the British Army. He had already had first-hand experience of the French chasseurs and tirailleurs during the campaigns in the Low Countries, and it was his keen interest in the light infantry arm that led to the establishment and setting up of the Experimental Corps of Riflemen.

The Duke of York's army reforms were fairly widespread but, in so far as the light infantry are concerned, they led to the publication of the 'Regulations for the Exercise of Riflemen and Light Infantry' and the setting up of a widespread study into the usefulness of the light infantry arm.

The only trained light unit at the time of the Duke's study was the 5th Battalion of the 60th Regiment. Eventually this was to be followed by the conversion of the 52nd Regiment to light status, quickly followed by the 43rd Regiment, the 51st, the 68th, the 71st, and the 85th and the 90th Regiments: troops who were to form the backbone of the famous Light Division in later years.

The Experimental Corps of Riflemen was not the only British formation to be armed with the rifle, as we shall see later. However, they are per-



haps the most famed of all. The Corps began its life early in the year 1800 as a direct result of the Duke of York's study into their viability and his far-reaching reforms. They were commanded and formed by Colonel Coote Manningham and Lieutenant Colonel William Stuart, because of the practical experience both of these officers had had of leading light troops in the West Indies. The men were drawn

Private of the North Yorks Militia circa 1814. These were said to have been the first rifle-armed troops in the British Army, being formed in 1796.

from detachments from a total of 13 different regiments from the regular army with the addition of some recruits from the Fencible regiments.

The Experimental Corps was clad in dark or what is now known as rifle green, given

**Key to colour photos overleaf.**

**Page 18, top left:**

Note here the rank distinction of the chosen man, or lance corporal as he would be known today; he wears a band of white worsted lace which encompasses his right arm.

**Top right:**

The 95th were not the only British troops to be armed with the Baker rifle. The sharpshooter companies of the King's German Legion were also armed with the rifle; the remainder being armed with the smooth-bore. This sergeant of the 2nd Light Battalion KGL differs slightly in dress from the riflemen of the 95th, in that he wears the grey overalls instead of the green of the 95th, the green tufted ball on his shako which is slightly more tapered than that of the 95th, which also has a chin strap. Note also the tufted wings worn on the shoulders of his tunic.

**Bottom left:**

Rear view of the 95th Rifles' officer. The dolman worn by this officer is of the less elaborate starburst type, an example of which survives in the Rifle Brigade Museum in Winchester.

**Bottom right:**

Riflemen skirmishing in pairs; one man covers whilst the other loads.

**Page 19, top left:**

Officer of the 95th Rifles.

**Page 19, top right:**

Officer of the 95th Rifles peers through a brass telescope.

**Page 19, bottom left:**

As above.

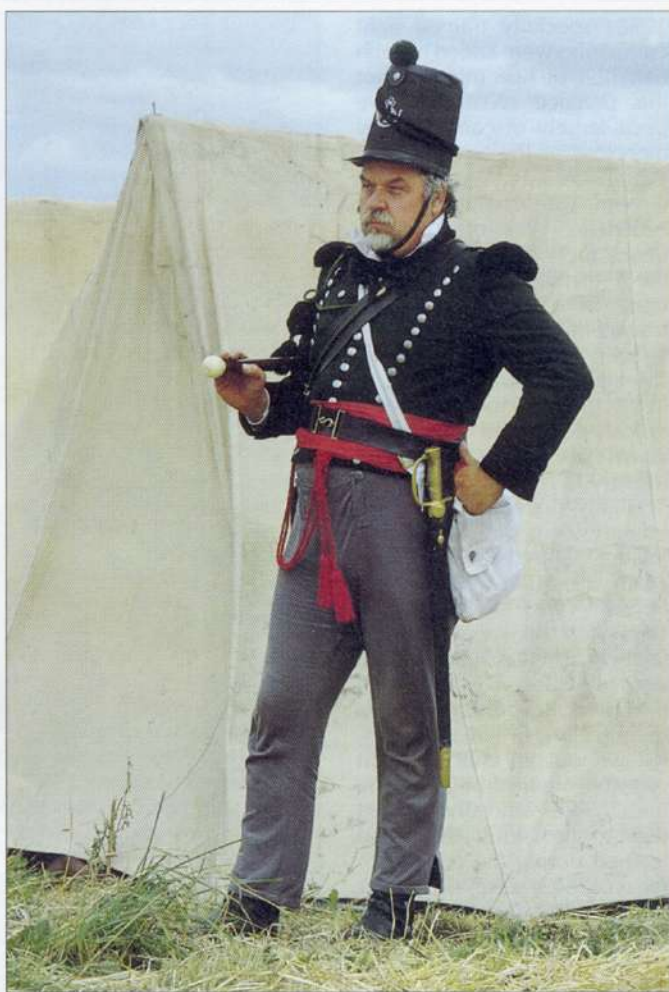
**Page 19, bottom right:**

Frontal view of an officer of the 95th Rifles. Note the shako with its distinctive upturned peak. The uniform is in rifle green with black velvet collar and cuffs. The buttons are of silver, of the ball and half type. The rest of the appointments are in silver with black leather accoutrements. The sash is in the typical light infantry style and he wears a cut feather plume rather than the worsted tuft of the rank and file.

black leather accoutrements instead of the traditional buff leather equipment, which needed to be constantly whitened with pipeclay. In addition to this they were issued with the new Baker rifle, made by Ezekiel Baker of Whitechapel. Instead of the usual 17-inch bayonet, it was issued with a 24-inch sword bayonet. **MI**

**To be continued**











# King James' Foot: Royal Infantry, Sedgemoor, 1685

JOHN TINCEY Paintings by PETER DENNIS

THE ARMY OF James II was a transitional one, still retaining many characteristics of the Civil War period but clearly showing — through the discarding of armour and the introduction of the bayonet, for example — the way the infantry would evolve in the 18th century.

AS THE LAST major battle to be fought on English soil, Sedgemoor has gained considerable fame, but most of the attention has been given to the rebels who followed 'King Monmouth'. The battle is the only well-documented occasion when the army of Charles II, newly adopted by his successor James II, fought a set piece battle. Part one of this article examines the strength of the infantry or 'foot' of that army and attempts to discover how they deployed and fought on the night of 5/6 July 1685. Part two will try to reconstruct the uniforms and weapons carried by the Royal infantry in 1685.

## Left:

*The army of Louis XIV led the way in military development during the late 17th century and in 1661 four grenadiers were added to each company of Foot. Initially the grenadier was seen as a specialist employed only to throw his bombs in battle or siege and aside from his bulging grenade pouch this soldier appears to be armed only with a sword. (From 'Les Travaux de Mars ou l'Art de La Guerre' by*

## TRAINING AND TACTICS

From 1661 until its evacuation in 1684 the colony of Tangier provided a harsh training ground for a large part of the army. The garrison faced determined sieges and ferocious skirmishes with the surrounding tribes. Losses were high, but the experience gained at Tangier was the basis for the effectiveness of the army which fought at Sedgemoor. At home training was the exception rather than the rule. To ease the strain on the civilian population, army units were split up and billeted around the country. Until James II introduced annual camps on

*Mallet, printed in 1672 and revised in 1684.)*

## Below:

*Tiny figures from a Hollar engraving of Tangier in 1669 show ordinary soldiers smoking and playing cards. Broad baldricks supporting swords and bandoliers of charges are worn and turn-back cuffs, cravats, ribbons in hat bands and buttoned rear coat vents are all in evidence. (David Carter collection.)*





Hounslow Heath in 1686 it was rare for drill to be held at more than company level and firing practice for musketeers was not encouraged due to the cost of gunpowder. The six new troops added to the Royal dragoons on 30 June 1685 were fortunate to be issued with a barrel of gunpowder every three months for 'exercise of arms'.

Following the Restoration of Charles II, English officers had habitually entered mercenary service in the army of Louis XIV to gain a military education. This ended in the mid-1670s when England formed an anti-French alliance with the Dutch. The loss of access to the French military establishment led to the introduction of the first official drill book of the British Army. Since Tudor times drill books had been in circulation, but these had been the work of individuals and their adoption a matter of the personal taste of a regiment's senior officers. On 8 December 1675 The Duke of Monmouth as *de facto* commander of the English Army ordered the king's printer Thomas Newcombe to print 100 copies of *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* for distribution to officers. Many more copies were printed in 1676, 1678 and

*The French army quickly increased its complement of grenadiers so that each regiment contained a full company. This diminished the specialised nature of the grenadier and began his transformation into an élite soldier fighting with musket rather than grenade alone. This soldier of the Gardes Francaises de la Maison du Roi is fully equipped with fusil and shoulder cartridge pouch. (From 'L'Art Militaire Francois Pour L'Infanterie' by Pierre Giffart, 1696.)*

1682. In 1685 a much extended and altered edition was produced to include instructions for drill with flintlock muskets and to update many of the fighting formations.

At Sedgemoor the Royal infantry were drawn up with their front protected by a deep drainage ditch and the battle consisted largely of a firefight. The fact that the battle was fought at night and that the army was roused from its slumbers by a surprise attack makes it difficult to be certain what formation they would have adopted. Only the Royal Scots had marked out the positions that their men should take up in the event of an attack. However, the



**Overleaf Peter Dennis' reconstructions show, 1: Musketeer, First Regiment of Foot Guards, 1685.** The Foot Guards received new uniforms two months before Sedgemoor for the Coronation of James II. Francis Sandford, a Royal Herald, recorded this following description of musketeers of the First Foot Guards: 'The private soldiers were all new cloathed in coats of red broadcloth, lined and faced with blue; their hats were laced about with silver, turned up and garnished with blew worsted. The musquetiers were armed with snaphance musquets, with sanguined barrels, three foot eight inches in length; good swords in waste belts and collars of bandoliers'. Cartridge boxes were used by grenadiers and dragoons but musketeers retained the bandolier of charges. In 1645 the New Model Army was equipped with bandoliers with painted 'boxes'. After the Restoration The Coldstream Guards are reported to have 'boxes' painted green, which was then their facing colour. This musketeer therefore has light blue 'boxes' to match his regiment's facings.

**2: Pikeman of the First Regiment of Foot Guards,**

**1685.** Sandford described the pikemen thus: 'The pikemen with pikes sixteen feet long, each headed with a three-square point of steel and good swords in broad shoulder-belts, wearing about their wastes, shashes or scarfs of white worsted fringed with blew'. Although helmets may have been issued for active service the felt hat was the normal head dress for pikemen as well as musketeers. Hats were often worn with the brim pinned up as a matter of individual choice rather than a regimental distinction. All possible variations were worn with the exception of the back pinned up and the brim pulled low. Unlike musketeers, pikemen retained a waist sash as a decoration and as this made a waist belt impractical, retained the shoulder baldrick to carry their swords.

**3: Grenadier of the First Foot Guards, 1685.** The painting of Francis Hawley (see black and white illustration) is a unique representation of an early English grenadier. However, it is the image of an officer wearing a personal costume and any attempt to construct a grenadier's uniform must be supported by other evidence.

Sandford says of the grenadiers: 'The grenadiers were clothed as the musquetiers, but distinguished by caps of red cloth lined with blew shaloon, and laced with silver galoon about the edges; and on the frontlets of their caps (which were high and very large) was imbroidered the King's Cypher and crown. Each of these granadiers was armed with a long carabine strap, the barrel thereof three foot two inches in length, a cartouch box, gionet, granada-pouch and a hammer-hatchet.' The mitre cap in the Hawley painting is clearly similar to that described by Sandford, but decorated in gold rather than silver. Sandford says that the grenadiers were clothed like the musketeers and it is probable that the decoration on Hawley's coat was too expensive to be used on the coat of rankers. The buttonholes on our grenadier's coat are undecorated as were Hawley's. Horse Grenadiers at the Coronation had large loops of fine blue worsted edged and tufted with black and white on their coats, but there is nothing to suggest that foot grenadiers had the same decoration. In addition to the bayonet, cartridge box and grenade pouch carried by

Hawley, this grenadier has a fusil suspended on a broad strap.

**4: Lieutenant, First Foot Guards, 1685.** The first code of dress for officers was that laid down for Oxford's Horse in 1686. This proscribed the colour of the coats to be worn and the detail of decoration appropriate to each rank. The only formal instruction regarding the appearance of officers at the time of the Sedgemoor campaign was that made on the 1 September 1684 in which Charles II ordered that the rank of an officer should be denoted by the style of gorget worn: Captains were to wear gold; Lieutenants black studded with gold; and Ensigns silver. Lieutenants were also ordered to carry pikes rather than partizans. At the Coronation of James II the officers of the Foot Guards appeared in lavish costumes of scarlet and Cloth of Gold. For field service this Lieutenant of the First Foot Guards has chosen a more practical garb but his coat, like that of Grenadier Captain Francis Hawley, is still in the regimental colours of red or scarlet with light blue linings reflecting the move towards set uniforms for company officers.











normal procedure for drawing up a battalion into battle formation was to place the companies in open order in line abreast. The orders given were: 'Have a care to form the battalion.'

Musketeers to the right and left outwards.

Pikes to the right and left inwards.

March, interchanging ground.'

This resulted in a centre of pikemen flanked by equal wings of musketeers. This was a difficult manoeuvre possible only under the close control of the junior officers who formed up on the flank and rear of the body. A space of not less than 50 yards was left between battalions so that a body 50 men abreast could march through. The ranks were drawn up at six foot distance with one pace of three feet allocated for each man, 'So that every Soldier may have free liberty to use his Arms; the best Rule for which is, That every Soldier keep half a Foot from his Right-hand-man'.

Files were drawn up six deep, but given the nature of the Sedgemoor position it is probable that the musketeers would have executed the order, 'Rere half files of musketeers to the right or left, double your front'. This resulted in files three deep and maximised the firepower of the battalion. The manner in which the battalion gave fire is detailed by the *Abridgement of the English Military Discipline* 1685 edition: 'The Command is, "First rank of musketeers kneel," Which they are to do by falling back with the Right Legs, and not stepping forward with their Left, and keeping their muskets so low, that the Two other ranks may Fire easily over them... When the first rank is commanded to kneel, the Two other Ranks of Muskeriers are to Close forward, as also the Five Ranks of Pikes as close as they can with conveniency to use their Arms, without any other word of command.

"Two last ranks present", Which they are always to do Brest high, and the First of the Two is always to stoop without any word of Command.

"Fire."

"Recover your arms," At which word of Command, The Front Rank stands up, without any other word of Command, having their Muskets Recovered streight upright before them ready Cockt and guarded.

"Front rank present."

"Fire."

"Recover your arms."

No mention is made of how the six musketeers who were armed with flintlocks were dis-

tributed amongst their matchlock-armed comrades, but it is likely that they formed one file.

Special instructions were given for the grenadiers. On the march the grenadiers acted as the vanguard marching 20 paces in front of the battalion. In battle the grenadier company was split into three parts, one forming in front of the pikemen and one on each wing of the battalion. The first rank of the two wings of grenadiers prepared grenades while the other two ranks fired, as did the musketeers. The grenadiers before the pikes fired when the front rank of muskets took up their kneeling position and then prepared grenades ready to throw immediately prior to a charge by the pikemen.<sup>7</sup>

### THE LINE OF BATTLE

As a double strength regiment, the First Foot Guards customarily drew up in two battalions and the Royal army was therefore composed of six battalions rather than the five often quoted. These battalions contained differing numbers of companies which were not of equal strength.

In theory all companies should have mustered 100 private soldiers, but during peace this figure was reduced to 60 for the centre companies of guard regiments and 50 for line and all grenadier companies. Evidence of this can be found in the records of the issue of equipment. A Royal warrant of June 1683 indicates that the First Foot Guards had companies numbering 60 private soldiers<sup>8</sup> and a similar order of January 1684 relating to the Coldstream Guards gives the same number<sup>9</sup>. On 13 June 1685, the day that news of Monmouth's landing reached the King, an order was made for all companies to be recruited up to a strength of 100 men<sup>5</sup>. Two days later warrants were issued for the centre companies of the First Foot Guards and the Coldstreams to receive weapons for a further 40 men, plus an extra sergeant and a drummer (confirming that their previous strength had been 60 private soldiers)<sup>6</sup>. After the rebellion had been crushed an order was issued for these companies to be reduced to a strength of 80 men<sup>7</sup>.

The grenadier companies of the Guard regiments did not share the high status of their centre companies. An order of 28 April 1684 for the addition of two companies of grenadiers to the Guards specifies 50 private soldiers per company<sup>4</sup>. On 23 June 1685 a warrant was issued



*Francis Hawley commanded a company of grenadiers of the First Foot Guards during the 1685 campaign. He wears a red coat with the light blue facings of his regiment, but the lavish gold braid decoration is evidence that this is not a regimental issue uniform. He carries a plug bayonet indicating that he would have been armed with a musket or (fusil) and the pouch on the front of his belt may be for his cartridges. Over his shoulder he wears a grenade bag and is pictured having just lit the fuze of a grenade. (Private collection.)*

whom three may have been corporals<sup>10</sup>. In a response to the rebellion on 17 June 1685, Dumbarton's and Trelawney's Regiments were ordered to receive arms for 50 additional soldiers in each company, with no addition of sergeants or drums<sup>11</sup>. They were to receive 28 matchlock muskets, 6 snaphance muskets, 16 long pikes and 34 bandoliers. This scale of issue, with the addition of a halberd for the sergeant and a drum, was to be standard for the new companies raised to oppose the rebellion.

Fortunately a document dated 20 July 1685 exists giving a calculation of the pay of the army only two weeks after the battle. This lists the numbers of private soldiers on the strength of each regiment. The text in square brackets has been inserted to give the numbers of regular companies and of grenadier companies in each regiment. It confirms that in each Guard regiment a centre company was 60 strong, but a grenadier company only 50 strong. In Line units all companies were 50 strong<sup>12</sup>.

Despite the many warnings that it had received, the government was taken by surprise when Monmouth landed at Lyme Regis. Forces were

for arms for a further 50 men to be issued increasing these companies to 100 strong<sup>9</sup>.

Five companies of Trelawney's Regiment numbered 60 private soldiers each upon their transfer to the Irish establishment in 1684, but in England 60 men remained the peacetime standard. Two companies were added to the Holland Regiment acting as the garrison of Elizabeth Castle in Jersey on 20 October 1684: they received 26 matchlock muskets, 9 snaphance muskets, 18 long pikes, 2 halberds and a drum, making 53 soldiers of



	No. of Private Soldiers.
His Mats. Three Troops of Horse Guards and Granadiers	792
Royall Regiment of Horse	450
First Regimt of Foot Guards	[24 co. + 2 Gr co.] 1540
Coldstream Regt of Foot	[12 co. + 1 Gr co.] 770
Royall Regiment of Foot	[20 co. + 1 Gr co.] 1050
Queen Dowagers Regt. of Foot	[10 co. + 1 Gr co.] 550
Prince of Denmarks Regimt.	[12 co. + 1 Gr co.] 650
Holland Regiment	[12 co. + 1 Gr co.] 650
Royall Regiment of Dragoons	600
Sr. John Laniers Regiment of Horse	450
<b>Totall</b>	<b>8052</b>

ordered piecemeal to the West Country and urgent orders were sent out to recruit the regiments up to their war strength. When the battle was won new orders were issued that Guard companies should be reduced. However, this recruiting and subsequent reduction may have been only a paper exercise for it does not appear that any recruits reached the army before the battle. The last of the Guard contingents which formed the Sedgemoor army marched out of London on 19 June, but more than a week later on 28 June an order was made, 'That the Recruits raised for the two Battalions of our First Regiment of Foot Guards... do march on Munday being the 29th day of this instant June from their present quarters to Brentford in our County of Middx.'<sup>13</sup>

On 30 June the Earl of Sunderland wrote to the Earl of Feversham, commander of the army, 'The King has ordered the recruits consisting of 400 men and 4 companies of Dumbarton's Regiment to march from Branford to Colebrook this night'.<sup>14</sup>

The four companies Sunderland mentions were not the detachment from Dumbarton's which joined the Royal army that day and were to fight at Sedgemoor. These reinforcements were intended to reach the army on 3 July, but the absence of the additional companies of Dumbarton's Regiment demonstrates that they had not caught up with the army by the time of the battle.

Some companies would not have been up to strength, but it is difficult to discover exact details. We do have some figures relating to the grenadier company of the First Foot Guards commanded by Captain Francis Hawley. On 27 June he led his 45 grenadiers<sup>15</sup> accompanied by 20 troopers of the Horse Guards<sup>16</sup> in an attack on the rebel positions at Philips Norton, suffering eight or nine private soldiers killed and 30 wounded. A large number of these casualties must have fall-

en upon Hawley's Company, but his case was exceptional as no other Royal foot unit was closely engaged before the battle of Sedgemoor.

To summarise: Five regiments provided 34 companies in six battalions for the Sedgemoor army<sup>17</sup>. From the right of the line they were:

The Earl of Dumbarton's (The Royal Scots). Five companies including one of grenadiers, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Douglas. Circa 250 private soldiers.

The First Foot Guards (First Battalion). Six companies including one of grenadiers, commanded by the Duke of Grafton. Circa 350 private soldiers.

The First Foot Guards (Second battalion). Six companies including one of grenadiers, commanded by Major Eaton. Circa 350 private soldiers.

The Coldstream Guards. Seven companies including one of grenadiers, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Sackville. Circa 410 private soldiers.

The Queen Consort's (Trelawney's). Five companies including one of grenadiers, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Charles Churchill. Circa 250 private soldiers.

The Queen Dowager's (Kirke's). Five companies including one of grenadiers, commanded by Colonel Kirke. Circa 250 private soldiers.

The total of 1,860 men fits in well with contemporary estimates of 1,800 to 1,900 foot being present at the battle.

## UNIFORMS

The clothing provided to the ordinary soldier is listed in a warrant of 1 February 1678: 'For assuring payment for Clothes for all the new-raised soldiers and recruits in the present conjuncture.

'Charles R.

'For the new clothing with a cloth coat lined with baize, one pair of kearsey breeches, lined, with pockets, two shirts, two cravats, one pair of shoes, one pair of yarn hose, one hat,

edged and hat band, one sash, and also one sword and belt...'<sup>18</sup>

The coat followed the civilian fashion and was made in four parts, cut close to the body and reached down to just above the knee. The sleeves ended in large turned back cuffs which showed off the lining colour which was a distinguishing feature of each regiment. The front opening of the coat had buttons from throat to hem, but those from the waist down were left undone to facilitate marching. Neither coat nor shirt had a collar and a cravat prevented them from rubbing the soldier's neck. The cravat could be worn with its tails hanging over the coat or tucked in at the neck, according to the current fashion.

The breeches reached to just below the knee and were, like the hose, often in the same colour as the coat lining. Shoes were made so as to fit either foot which enabled them to be regularly swapped over so that wear was more evenly distributed. The hats, which were worn by both musketeers and pikemen from the Restoration, were made of black felt to imitate the beaver skin hats worn by officers. Given a good soaking in bad weather the brims would lose their stiffness and hats were often worn with one side cocked. A hat with the front brim cocked was said to be the mark of a soldier. Wearing the front brim down and the back cocked was known as 'a Monmouth cock' and would have been absent from the Royal army for obvious reasons.

The 1678 warrant makes no mention of a waistcoat and it is not known when this garment was first introduced into the army. An unusual entry in the records of the Ordnance Office at the Tower of London dated 2 June 1685 states that a number of workmen are to be recruited and dressed in a uniform consisting of 'Blew Breeches & stockings & red wastcoate and each workman to have a red cloath loose Coate to were lyned with blew & edged in ye Seame...'<sup>19</sup> This offers tenuous evidence for the dress of contemporary soldiers, but does establish the waistcoat as part of a uniform issued by the military authorities. The elusiveness of the military waistcoat may be due to the system of issuing new clothing on a two-year cycle with the old coat being converted to provide a waistcoat. This is supported by a description of a deserter appearing in the London Gazette of 9/13 June 1687. The soldier from Prince George of Denmark's Regiment wore a red coat with 'an old yel-

low coat under it'. This regiment had red coats with yellow linings, so the waistcoat may have been an old coat worn reversed. Until the succession of James II the regiment had been the Duke of York and Albany's Regiment and had worn yellow coats, so the deserter may have been wearing a two-year-old coat as a waistcoat.

In the 1670s pikemen and musketeers wore white waist sashes with fringes of a regimental colour. At this time swords were supported by shoulder belts, but by the early 1680s the musketeer had adopted a waist-belt and only pikemen retained their sashes.

Regimental commanders retained considerable control over the uniform of their men. A letter to the Duke of Beaufort dated 4 July 1685 concerning the raising of his regiment says, 'As to their Clothing, the outside being red, (his Majesty) leaves it to you to use what other colour you like best for the lining'. This has long been the case and the reasons for the choice of colour had not always been military as a letter written by Lord Chesterfield in 1667 indicates: '...The soldiers red coats lined with black and black flags with a red cross in a black field, which I did, because I was at that time in mourning for my mother'.<sup>20</sup>

The regiment remained the personal property of its commander and as a peacetime home army it was relatively easy to provide clothing for the soldiers. It was not until 1690 'That a standard of clothing shall be given which no officer may excel'.<sup>21</sup> When the time for re-clothing was approaching Colonels were ordered to appoint two or three officers to visit clothiers to see patterns of cloth and lining and to negotiate the lowest price possible. Uniforms were made to standard sizes and altered after they had been issued.

Officers did not yet wear uniform dress although there was a move towards red or scarlet as the basic colours for their coats. The right to individual choice of dress and decoration made it difficult to identify an officer's rank. On 1 September 1684 a Royal decree ordered that, 'Captains of Foot wear no other Corselet than of the colour of gold: all Lieutenants, black corselets studded with gold, and the Ensigns corselets of silver. And We do likewise think fit that all Lieutenants of Foot carry pikes and not partisans'.<sup>22</sup> **MI**

**To be continued**



# The Samaritans with Emerald Green Chevrons

JOHN P. LANGEILLIER

IN THE YEAR 1857 the United States Army began to regularise the uniforms for enlisted men who had been allowed since 1851 to serve in the fledgling medical corps. Their principal distinction was emerald green chevrons but many other uniform changes took place over the next 30 years, as described here.

IN THE MID-19th century the medical field began to take new directions in Western Europe and North America. Improvements could be seen in many areas, including within the United States Army which,

*Coats made after 1880 were to have white piping and emerald green facing. At the same time, white thread evidently replaced yellow on the hospital stewards' chevrons, at least for the dress coat. Note the lower sleeves bear service stripes, which indicated the completion of a five-year enlistment. In this case, the scarlet colour indicates a prior tour with the artillery. (Smithsonian Institution.)*

in 1851, elected to add enlisted personnel to its organisation as assistants to surgeons. At first these men had no special uniforms. They simply wore the outfit issued to them in whatever branch they had been mustered into the service and added the worsted epaulettes appropriate to a sergeant. One distinguishing device was called for, however: special half chevrons which were to be placed 'on the outside of each arm above the elbow... viz: of emerald green cloth, one and three-fourths inches wide, running obliquely downward from the outer to the inner seam of the sleeve, and at an angle of about thirty degrees...' The design was to be 'an embroidery of yellow silk one-eighth of an inch wide' on

both the upper and lower edge and a 'Caduceus' two inches long, embroidered also with yellow silk, the heads toward the outer seam of the sleeve.' While these specifications were clear-cut, it seemed that actual examples tended to deviate from the standard as time passed.

A half dozen years went by before the government took further steps to set off the medicos in an even more distinct manner. In 1857 general orders prescribed the uniform coat of the Ordnance Department, which was a single-breasted frock with plaited waist and nine large brass buttons of the 1854-pattern down the front.<sup>2</sup> Worsteds crimson cord or facing material ran around the collar and ornamented the separately applied cuffs. A welt of the same material appeared on the dress cap and a spherical pompon of buff on the lower two-thirds and green on the upper third topped the headpiece, utilising a yellow metal spread-eagle device as a fastener. It is not evident what the insignia was for this headgear, although it may have

been 'the metal Roman letters US within a brass wreath'.<sup>3</sup> Plain sky blue trousers with plaits, a two-inch-wide black leather belt with rectangular brass plate which bore an eagle as well as a separately applied German silver wreath, brass shoulder scales (presumably of the non-commissioned staff design), a black leather neck stock, and black bootees known as the 'Jefferson' pattern, were other elements of the outfit. The model 1840 non-commissioned officer's sword suspended from an over-the-shoulder leather sling with round breast-plate bearing an eagle, and a crimson sash, which wrapped around the waist two times then tied at the left hip, completed the formal outfit. The emerald green chevrons remained in use. For less formal circumstances, the pompon could be removed from the cap, as proved the case with the shoul-

*The 1885-pattern hospital steward's dress coat with the 1887-pattern chevrons remained regulation until 1897. (Smithsonian Institution.)*







The dress coat adopted in 1872 had all emerald green facing and trim with half chevrons boarded in yellow with a yellow caduceus in the centre of each. An emerald green pompon surmounted the dark blue dress cap and 1 1/4-inch emerald green stripes of facing material ran down the outer seams of the light blue wool kersey trousers. White berlin gloves formed another important element of the parade dress (Fort Laramie National Historic Site.)



der scales, sash, and sword.

By 1858 a slightly streamlined version of the frock coat came into existence, the plaits being eliminated. At the same time, dark blue trousers which matched the shade of the coat were called for, and a crimson worsted lace leg stripe, measur-

ing 1 1/2 inches wide, was to run down each outer seam. That same year witnessed the introduction of a new felt dress hat which bore a gilt wreath enclosing silver 'US' letters, a buff and green hat cord which terminated in fringed tassels, and a black ostrich feather. A stamped brass metal eagle, of the type formerly utilised to hold the pompon, kept the left side of the brim looped up to the tall crown.

An even more functional garb was adopted with the changes of 1858, when dark blue wool, four-button sack coats began to

be issued along with a forage cap that featured a high floppy crown and a flat leather visor.<sup>4</sup> A welt was to appear around the top of the crown of the same colour as the wearer's branch of service. This meant that crimson may have been used to coincide with the trim on the coat. In any case, after the new jacket and cap were made available, the

The regulation 1885 dress coat, with the 1887-pattern acting hospital steward's chevrons and the scarlet facing material crosses on the collar adopted in 1885. (Smithsonian Institution.)

Hospital Corps privates wore a single brassard on the left sleeve of their 1885 dress coats beginning in 1887. (Smithsonian Institution.)







The hat with ostrich feather and other regulation accessories and insignia was adopted in 1858. In addition, light blue trousers with a crimson  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch worsted stripe on each leg replaced dark blue versions, in 1861. (Smithsonian Institution.)

steward was admonished always to '... wear his undress uniform in the hospital, except on those occasions, such as musters and inspections, on which it is necessary for him to appear in full dress'.<sup>5</sup>

In essence, this was the prescribed uniform for hospital stewards for the next 14 years, although the trouser colour switched back to light blue in 1861 and the welt on the forage cap disappeared around that same time. In actual fact, however, a good deal of variation came about with the official pattern forage cap sometimes giving way to the low-crowned 'chassuer' (sic) cap which even might display officers' embroidered insignia instead of the metallic versions sanctioned by regulations. Officers' frock coats, vests, civilian slouch hats, and other deviations from the prescribed uniform likewise prevailed, particularly with personnel belonging to volun-

teers in the Union forces.<sup>6</sup>

At the end of the Civil War, many surplus uniform items remained on hand so that little change came about, the only exception being a short-lived 1867 authorisation for regimental hospital stewards to wear 'an oval with a "caduceus" embroidered in dark blue silk in the center of the oval'. These were to be placed above the standard sergeant's chevrons of worsted tape in the colour of the wearer's branch.<sup>7</sup> Then, in 1872, a board of officers deliberating on a revision of all US Army regulations, included a sweeping new uniform series.<sup>8</sup> This change encompassed the attire of hospital stewards.

For one thing, a dark blue 'basque' coat replaced the old style frock. Emerald green piping, as well as collar, cuff and tail flashes, were authorised for dress. Light blue trousers of the same pattern as issued during the late war continued, although  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch emerald green trouser stripes replaced the slightly wider crimson versions authorised in 1858. The new leg stripes were of facing material.<sup>9</sup> In turn, the crimson sash disappeared, as did the previous over-the-shoulder sword belt which was replaced by a waistbelt-

mounted frog (the frog being adopted in 1868). A cap with green pompon and worsted braid and the former gilt wreath with silver 'US' formed another part of the 1872 parade kit.

Originally, the latter insignia was to be the same as that worn during the Civil War, and was described in 1876 as 'of white metal, chased: Roman capitals one half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) inch high, to be placed within the wreath. To have wire loops soldered on the back to fasten to cap.' In turn, the wreath was to be 'of dead or unburnished gilt-metal, representing two olive branches, held at the bottom by a loop and a knot, turning upward and bending in an oval shape, approaching each other at the top'. The height was dictated as  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches with the width at the greatest

point between the outer edges set at  $2\frac{5}{8}$  inches. The branches were  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch and the whole wreath was held by a pair of brass wires on the back.<sup>10</sup>

Additionally, the year 1872 marked the official introduction of the lower crowned forage cap which previously had been popular with officers. Moreover, a plaited blouse with nine buttons and twisted worsted piping on the yoke, collar and cuffs was introduced similar to the British Norfolk jacket and in part inspired by use of a similar

*In 1858, a frock coat without plaits and with crimson cord or facing as well as the green-backed half chevrons became standard for hospital stewards. Brass shoulder scales were called for on dress occasions. (Smithsonian Institution.)*





garment during the Civil War by both North and South. Interestingly enough, this style was lauded in an 1868 report published under the auspices of the army's Surgeon General, although its unpopularity with the troops, difficulty of manufacture and problems in cleaning caused it to be rejected in favour of a five-button blouse of a simplified cut, beginning in 1874.

Regardless of the outer garment, all coats and overcoats displayed the emerald green half chevron with yellow trim and caduceus, this time being machine-embroidered rather than made by hand, as had been the case in the past. These chevrons were to be worn above the elbow, and ran obliquely downward from the outer seam to the inner seam at approximately a 30-degree angle. Regulations did not mention that chevrons were to be worn on blouses, but this proved the norm until the army eventually sanctioned the practice.<sup>11</sup>

Besides the dress and forage caps, other types of headgear were authorised, including the 1872 folding campaign hat. Non-regulation slouch hats and straw hats, for the hot season and extremely warm climates, likewise could be found in service. Then, in 1876, the Quartermaster Department called for a replacement for these various hats with the adoption of a black wool model having a stiff flat brim and a tall crown that bore a pair of 'brasher' spinners set on each side. This last feature was a miniature fan which, in theory, kept the soldier cool.<sup>12</sup>

The same board which proposed what became the 1876-pattern campaign hat likewise called for a new design for trousers, 'having frog-mouthed pockets, watch-pockets, strap and buckle at the back, a slight spring at the foot, and no waistband'.<sup>13</sup> Besides finally adopting the style of trousers which had been considered as part of the original 1872 uniform, but which subsequently were rejected because of the higher cost of manufacture, the board additionally recommended that the waist of uniform coats be lengthened 'from three-eighths of an inch to three-quarters of an inch according to (the wearer's) size', as well as shifting the belt loops slightly to the rear since the original placement interfered with the bayonet or sword on men of smaller stature.<sup>14</sup>

*Hospital Steward Charles Hendy, Sr (centre front), poses with four cavalry troopers from Fort McPherson in his 1872-pattern plaited hospital steward's blouse with nine staff buttons and green piping on the cuffs, collar and across the yoke. He wears the new forage cap adopted in the same year as the blouse. (Union Pacific Railroad.)*

Another addition of the 1870s came with the provision for cape linings in branch colours so that the overcoat cape gave some extra warmth as well as presenting a more dashing appearance as a boost to morale.<sup>15</sup> Thereafter, emerald green was inserted into the capes for hospital stewards, thereby providing striking contrast with the light blue kersey of the coat and itself.

In addition to the lined cape, experimentation with British-inspired summer helmets represented one more effort to provide better clothing for the soldier in terms of coping with varied climatic conditions. After their gradual introduction on a trial basis, in 1877, these white drill-covered cork items were deemed suitable for general issue in warm weather. As such, they were authorised for widespread use in 1880.

In the same year, a second change in the dress coat came about. On 27 February 1880, the Quartermaster Department issued Specification No 11 which called for white piping around the collar, down the front seam, around the cuff and tail flashes, and the belt loops. Apparently, the chevrons also were modified at the same time to have white borders and a white caduceus in lieu of the yellow on green pattern authorised in 1872, although regulations continued to prescribe the latter scheme. **MI**

#### To be continued

*With the exception of the crimson sash, 1840-pattern non-commissioned officer's sword and light blue kersey trousers with crimson worsted leg stripe, this circa 1870 hospital steward deviates from the regulations. He wears an officer's frock coat and forage cap with embroidered officer's style insignia. In addition, his chevrons are custom-made. (Fort Laramie National Historic Site.)*





# 14th Century Cavalry: The Mamluk Art of Furusiyya

DAVID NICOLLE

THE MUSLIM ARMIES which faced and finally forced back the Crusaders during the 12th and 13th centuries were, in some ways, much admired by their Christian foes. Above all the Muslims' discipline and ability of their commanders to retain battlefield control amazed the Crusaders at a time when western European armies were characterised by an almost anarchic reliance on individual 'prowess'. Central to such professionalism on the part of the Muslim warrior was a well established Islamic training system known as *Furusiyya*.

THE MUSLIM soldier's discipline, above all that of the cavalry, was based on a heritage of strict training that went back even beyond the Islamic era to the classical empires of Sassanian Iran, early Byzantium and perhaps Rome itself. During the first four centuries of Islamic civilization this heritage had been further refined, with additional military influences coming from Turkish Central Asia, India and even China. By the time the First Crusade erupted into the Middle East at the close of the 11th century, the result was a highly developed code of military skills known as *Furusiyya*, literally 'that which distinguishes

One of the most beautifully illustrated late 15th century Mamluk *Furusiyya* manuscripts has now unfortunately been split up and scattered among various national and private collections in London, Paris, Cairo and perhaps St Petersburg. Since the title-page has been lost even its name and author are unknown, though the original text appears to have been written during the 14th century. Here a horseman thrusts his long spear through a small hole in a buttayah 'cask' form of target raised up on a qundaq bearer. (Keir Collection, London.)



es a horse-warrior'.

Alongside numerous books on *Furusiyya* were many others on tactical theory which also

Another page from this same nameless *Furusiyya* manuscript shows Mamluk Nafatiyah or 'Fire Troops' exercising. A horseman and two foot soldiers on the upper register are protected by special clothes, lined with fireproof raw talc (magnesium silicate), to which they have attached numerous tiny fireworks. Those on foot carry objects similarly dotted with fireworks while the horseman has a long pole to which further fireworks are fastened. Below them are two other Mamluks wearing fluffy red woollen Zamt hats. One has flighted javelins with three-pronged blades to which large packets of nalt Greek Fire, while behind him is an even larger such 'fire javelin'. Such weapons had long been used against an enemy's wooden engines during siege warfare in the Middle East. The man on the right, however, carries a very early form of gun or 'hand-cannon'. (Keir Collection, London.)

drew upon the pre-Islamic military heritage as well as the experience of previous Muslim commanders. But while books on tactics were intended for commanding officers or ruling princes, those dealing with the body of accumulated knowledge known as *Furusiyya* were primarily intended for junior officers and even for ordinary cavalry troopers. Within mediaeval Islamic culture, of course, far more people could read or write than in Christian Europe — and this certainly included many soldiers.

Even in relatively scholarly histories of the Crusades *Furusiyya* is often translated as 'Chivalry', as if the soldiers of mediaeval Islam were 'knights' cast in the same mould as their Crusader foes. In fact *Furusiyya* has, like *Jihad* and many other Arabic words with supposedly warlike overtones, both more subtle and more specific meanings than the inaccurate misleading translation of 'Chivalry'. Just as the Muslim *Jihad* is not, and never has been, simply a 'Holy War', so the Muslim soldier's *Furusiyya* had little in common with that code of military conduct and



loyalty which the knightly class of mediaeval Europe knew as Chivalry. The Islamic concept of *Futuwwa* may have come closest to that; nor was it simply an ideal of courage — the *Shuja'a* of the Muslim warrior. Rather *Furusiyya* was a system of physical fitness and specific military skills. These ranged from the use of an array of weapons, and also maintaining them without relying on servants, to fighting in units of various sizes, in various situations or different terrains. It also involved carrying out an extraordinary variety of complicated unit manoeuvres. Indeed, if a European parallel was to be sought for medieval *Furusiyya* it might best be found in the cavalry training of the 18th and 19th centuries — much of which reflected European warfare against the Ottoman Turks or, in the case of British cavalry, warfare in India. Interestingly enough both the Ottoman *Sipahi* and his Mughul Indian counterpart still relied on cavalry traditions that had grown directly out of mediaeval Islamic *Furusiyya*.

Perhaps the greatest exponents of *Furusiyya* during the Middle Ages were the Mamluks of Egypt and Syria whose extraordinary slave-recruited army and slave-origin rulers dominated much of the Middle East from AD1250 to 1517. The great majority of surviving manuscripts on *Furusiyya* also come from this Mamluk Sultanate. The men who wrote these often magnificently illustrated books had varied backgrounds. Hasan al Ramah was a professional soldier in late 13th century Syria and so, in all probability, was his teacher Najam al Din al Ahdab. Another writer on *Furusiyya* was Taybugha al Baklamishi, a renowned Mamluk archer who, around AD1368, claimed — not entirely accurately — to have been the first author to seriously analyse the skills of horse archery. Ibn Mangli was another author-officer, this time of Mongol family origin, who may have commanded a thousand *Halqa* (freeborn rather than slave-recruited *mamluk*) troops in Alexandria in the late 14th century. As well as books of good advice for young rulers, and on hunting and the magic of numbers, Ibn Mangli's purely military writings dealt with archery, land and naval tactics where he was influenced by Byzantine Greek sources. In complete contrast Umar al Ansari of the early 15th century was a civilian scholar whose work is steeped in arcane and

The earliest known surviving manuscript of a *Furusiyya* manual dates from mid-14th century Mamluk Syria or Egypt although some of the texts of such manuscripts were written 50 or more years earlier. The titles of earlier books of *Furusiyya* and the names of their authors are known but the works themselves have been lost. On the other hand the skills described in such detail in 14th century or later *Furusiyya* training texts are clearly illustrated in the Islamic art of a previous century; in manuscripts, metalwork, painted ceramics, carved wood or stucco. One of the best, but unfortunately least known, such series of illustrations is on this magnificent mid- or late 13th century inlaid bronze candlestick base. It is now in a private collection and has never been fully published. Much of the gold and silver inlay has been lost but the nine horsemen who career around the object probably portray Mamluk warriors during their most successful period when they not only finally crushed the invading Crusaders but halted the previously unchecked tide of Mongol conquest.

#### Top:

A heavily armoured man wearing a mighfar mail coif over the lower part of his face and a lamellar jawshan cuirass on his body carries a deeply convex shield, though no other weapon is visible.

#### Centre:

Another horseman with a mighfar mail coif over his head and a lamellar jawshan cuirass on his body wields a long double-ended spear and rides a horse with a full caparison over its body.

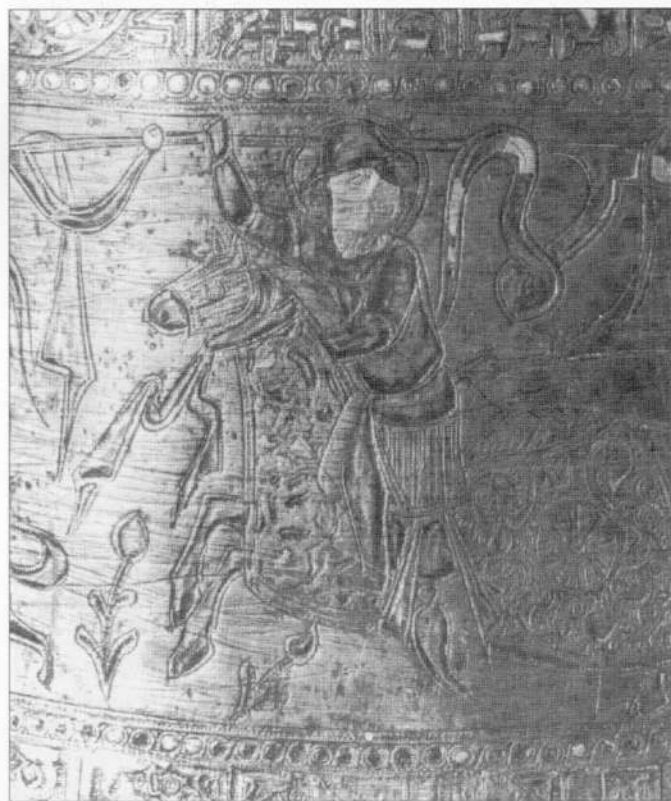
#### Bottom:

An apparently unarmoured man again rides a horse with a complete, probably mail or buff leather-lined or quilted, caparison but this time the animal also has a chamfron to protect its head. The rider may well wear mail beneath his clothes, as was normal in 13th century Muslim armies, and his broad-brimmed headgear may be a chapel-de-fer 'warhat' either captured from the Crusaders or imported from Italy.

traditional Islamic military science.

#### The branches of *Furusiyya*

These authors generally agreed on the main aspects of *Furusiyya*. They consisted of: *la'b al rumh* lance play; *la'b al kura*, polo; *qabaq*, archery at a high target; *qighaj*, archery at a ground target; *sawq al birjas*,







Here a lightly equipped cavalierman wields a normal single-ended spear in the two-handed technique used since ancient times and still recommended by the *Furusiyya* manuals. His horse is unprotected and he has no helmet, but he does have a small form of lamellar jawshan cuirass on his chest.

another form of archery and possibly use of the javelin; *ramy bi'l bunduq*, shooting with a pellet-bow; *ramy al nushshab*, archery in general; *darb bi'l sayf*, sword fencing; *fann al dabbus*, use of a mace; *sira'*, wrestling; *sawq al mahmil*, display games associated with the *Mahmal* process when Muslim pilgrims returned from Mecca each year; *says*, hunting and *sibaq al khayl*, horse racing.



A spear-armed horseman with a lamellar jawshan but no helmet appears to have been struck in the neck by an arrow. The horse wears a caparison over its body and neck, and probably a chamfron on its head.

spears. When they retired their deputies would advance to fight, followed by their pupils one at a time until each member of the team had fenced. Another exercise saw individual lancers charging at a revolving wooden statue mounted on a wooden stake. This statue had a shield and mace, and would spin when struck, threatening to strike the horseman as he rode past. Polo was particularly popular during the early Mamluk period but continued to be played until the fall of the Sultanate.

A great many archery games are mentioned but only a few are described. These include the *qabaq* which had been adopted by the Mamluks from nomadic Turcoman tribal warriors. It seems to have been

more of a sport than a realistic military exercise and was particularly popular under the 'Bahri' Sultans of the early Mamluk period. Here a *qabaq* or hollow gourd was hung in a large circle mounted on a tall pole and the horse-archer shot at it as he rode by. On special occasions the gourd could be of gold or silver with a pigeon inside, presumably lightly secured in some way. If the arrow struck the gourd, making the panic-stricken bird fly away, the archer kept the gold or silver gourd and was also presented with a valuable robe of honour. In AD1293 an *amir* (officer) named Badr al Din Baysari invented a special saddle with very low cantle or back which enabled him to shoot rearwards with his head on the animal's rump after he had passed the target. This further suggests that the *qabaq* game was more for show than for realistic military training.

The *qighaj* game was also copied from the nomad Turks but had a clearer military application. Here a horseman shot downwards and at very close range at a wickerwork target filled with sand as he rode past, just as he would shoot at broken enemy infantry. Otherwise the normal archery target or *buttiyah* was stuffed with cotton and stood on four legs of variable height.

Long distance 'flight shoot-

Probably the oldest surviving *Furusiyya* manuscript is a magnificently illustrated copy of the *Nihayat al Su'l* by Muhammad Ibn 'Isa al Aqsara'i. It was made in Mamluk Egypt in AD1366. This page shows an elderly or senior Mamluk horseman wearing an iron helmet with a flame at its summit and fire on his shield. He is, in fact, demonstrating the 'Fire Game' in which the most experienced Mamluks fastened packets of naft or Greek Fire to various parts of their clothing, equipment or harness. By the mid-14th century such naft clearly included gunpowder and the exercise, though largely intended as a spectacle, had originally been designed to frighten an enemy's horses. (*Nihayat al Su'l*, f156, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.)





One of only two horse-archers on this candlestick base shoots forwards. His body is protected by a lamellar jawshan and the arrows in the quiver on his right hip are visible behind the saddle. The horse has a cloth or extended part of its saddle-blanket over the upper part of its neck, perhaps strengthened in some way for defensive purposes.

ing' clearly developed an archer's skill at long-range harassment tactics. This required not only strength but also considerable technique when light 'flight' arrows were shot from a strong but short bow. Poor technique meant that a light arrow simply broke as it curved around the belly of the bow when loosed. The use of protective thumb-rings was also characteristic of 'flight shooting' and in AD1301/2 one record shot outside Cairo covered no less than 668 metres! Normally, however, the penetrating power of an arrow depended on its weight, and this in turn reflected the power of the bow.

As well as shooting at different targets at different ranges, the best qualified Mamluk could use 12 different archery shots, plus seven minor variations, including one known as the *jaramki* during which his bow was held behind his neck. He should also be able to decide whether to slay or merely wound his opponent. When shooting on the move a horse-archer had to be able to loose at the gallop and only then wheel aside. Contrary to what so many European writers still say, the horse-archer did not guide his mount with the pressure of

his knees while holding his bow. On the contrary his horse was trained to ignore variations of such knee pressure and to continue running in a straight line until the rider took up his reins once more. Nor did the Mamluk horse-archer ride with particularly short stirrup leathers, as so many western scholars still apparently believe. His stirrup leathers were, of course, longer than those used by European knights who virtually stood 'straight legged' in their saddles. In fact Mamluks rode more like modern horsemen and their stirrup irons would touch their inner ankle bones if a rider took his feed from the stirrups. Like many modern riders on lively young horses, the Mamluks often used martingales — straps running from the animal's bridle to breast-strap and girth which stopped the horse jerking up its head and knocking the man's bow. A small strap could also run from one finger of the right hand to the rider's reins, enabling him to retrieve the latter quickly after he had made his shot. Or the reins could be shortened by being knotted, the knot being hung on the pommel or front of the rider's saddle so that the reins did not have too much slack.

To conserve their horses, particularly when fighting

*Several copies of the AD1366 Nihayat al Su'l were made a few years later, this example in Syria in AD1371. Here a Mamluk exercises with a rumh spear and medium sized shield of the normally wooden turs type. (Nihayat al Su'l, Ms Add 18866, f138v, British Library, London.)*



Mongols or other enemies with far larger reserves of mounts, the Mamluks practiced shooting 'at rest' with a very high rate of fire. By being expected to hit a 95cm wide target at a range of 75 metres, and loosing three arrows in one and a half seconds or five in two and a half seconds, these Mamluk horse archers could counter the greater mobility of their Mongol foes. Such archery techniques had been used by the settled peoples of the Middle East against their ever-present Central Asian nomadic enemies for at least a thousand years. Meanwhile the vaunted English archer at Agincourt is estimated to have shot only one arrow per second. Even the Mamluk's quiver was designed to enable him to snatch another

*In close pursuit of the horse-archers is what appears to be the most heavily armoured man in the sequence, though he rides a relatively unprotected horse. Over his full mail mighfar or face-covering coil he has the outline of a sharbush, the typical fur-cap which distinguished the basically Turkish military élite of the Middle East from the 12th to 14th centuries. His body is protected by a lamellar jawshan cuirass while his arms also appear to be covered by some kind of lamellar or splinted armour which almost recalls that seen in Byzantine art. In his right hand is a long straight sword while in his left hand he carries a small round shield.*

bunch of arrows at great speed while the Central Asian Mongol







Many *Furusiyya* training manuals were written in the Mamluk Sultanate during the 15th century. This wonderfully illustrated version by Ibn Akhi Khazam was called *Kitab al makhzun al bab an funun* — 'The book of the store-house of the gate of the art (of war)'. It dates from AD1470 and it is interesting to note that while many later European cavalry techniques were based on mediaeval Islamic *Furusiyya*, the word 'magazine' in the sense of a place to store ammunition also comes from the Arabic *makhzun* or 'storage place'.

quiver was designed to protect arrows from the weather.

Other 14th century archery skills included the ability to shoot fragile 'eggs' filled with incendiary material through specially designed 'arrow-guides'. Later Mamluk *Furusiyya* manuscripts also included exercises using crossbows on horseback and on foot. The crossbow had been known among Muslim infantry for hundreds of years but by the 14th century it had come to be seen as a suitable weapon for small or inexperienced cavalrymen.

The *birjas* game may have involved throwing a headless javelin from the saddle at another rider; in which case it was much the same as the ancient Roman *hippica gymnasia* or the later *cirit* game which is still played in parts of eastern Turkey. Perhaps surprisingly, 14th century *Furusiyya* manuals also describe the skills required of infantry archers. This may have been an example of old redundant skills still being listed for traditional reasons, but it should also be remembered that the fully qualified Mamluk

Here a pair of Mamluk cavaliers, one with a quite amazing moustache, practice fencing with bamboo staves to improve their skill with spears. The caption states that this shows: 'A blow beneath the throat (of the enemy's horse). Slide the blow down to the rump (of the horse). Rise in the stirrups and clutch the enemy who will certainly fall from this blow.' (*Kitab al makhzun al bab an funun*, Ms Arabe 2824, f21v, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)

was a very versatile soldier who was fully prepared to fight on foot if the need arose. Here the infantry archer was advised that, although shooting in a squatting position gave less of a target to the enemy, it was very difficult. On the other hand shooting beneath the protection of a shield was considered an important and necessary skill.

Sword exercises included those while carrying small or larger shields or without a shield. Some shields were so small that they could be hidden beneath the user's coat to deceive a foe. But perhaps the most important practical sword exercise for a horseman was riding several times past a tall green reed thrust into the ground, cutting a small piece off the reed with his sword during each pass. Nevertheless the sword still seems to have been regarded as a secondary weapon for cavalymen. They in turn were advised to use bows and spears when attacking infantry while foot soldiers would similarly use bows and spears when defending themselves against horsemen. Yet the sword and mace were rec-



ommended for 14th century infantry when attacking cavalry. Exercises using maces are mentioned in *Furusiyya* manuals but were rarely described. Wrestling also seems to have been done in private, not in public on those broad *maydans* or military parade-training grounds which were a feature of most Islamic cities.

Hunting served as a military exercise in all mediaeval countries, East and West. During the 13th century the Mamluks used the same highly organised large-scale hunting techniques as the Mongols, with a huge circle of horsemen surrounding a tract of countryside before gradually closing the circle to slaughter the trapped animals. During this period horse racing ranged for those within the *maydans* to very long cross-country races ridden by bedouin Arab auxiliaries. During the 14th century, when the Euphrates river formed the Mamluk's war-torn north-eastern frontier, a Mamluk was also trained to cross rivers either by swimming, or holding on to his horse's harness, or by using a one-man raft made from local brushwood.

The European knight usually expected his squires, grooms or servants to help him put on his armour, maintain his equipment and look after his horses. In complete contrast the fully qualified Mamluk was trained not only to put on and take off his own armour, but even to do so on horseback while the animal was moving! He was expected to maintain and where possible repair his own armour, to have a basic knowledge of the blacksmith's art, maintain his horse's harness and look after his own animal. These Mamluks, in fact, continued the original Muslim tradition that warfare was the

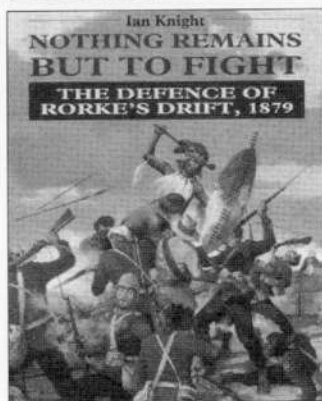
On this page of the manuscript two horsemen fence, one with a straight broadsword, the other with a single-edged sabre. Both men have small shields strapped to their shoulders, just as had been done by the cavalymen of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian back in the 6th century AD. The rider on the left is, however, not really supposed to be left-handed. It is merely that an artist has shown these two as almost mirror images in a highly stylised form of Islamic art. (*Kitab al makhzun al bab an funun*, Ms Arabe 2824, f37r, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)

responsibility of all free male 'believers', rich or poor, powerful or humble. He may now have formed an exclusive élite dominating both the armies and the government of the Mamluk state, but he remained a professional soldier rather than a member of an arrogant aristocratic class. **MI**

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## WIN THIS BOOK!

**Nothing Remains But To Fight: The Defence of Rorke's Drift, 1879** by Ian Knight. Greenhill. ISBN 1-85367-137-1; 167pp; 8pp colour plates, mono photos, sketches, maps throughout; appendices, bibliography & index; £19.95.

Ian Knight continues to astonish and delight with his meticulous research and documentation on the African colonial campaigns, and publisher Lionel Leventhal is offering six free copies of his latest work to readers of *Military Illustrated* who can answer the following three questions correctly. Your answers should be sent on a postcard to the editor, Bruce Quarrie, at the address on the contents page. As is usual, no correspondence can be entered into; the first six correct entries from the postbag will receive a copy of *Nothing Remains But To Fight*; the editor's decision is final.

**Question 1:** Who played the part of Colour-Sergeant Bourne in the film *Zulu*?

**Question 2:** How many men from the British garrison were killed or mortally wounded during the battle?

**Question 3:** What is the nickname of the 3rd (East Kent) Regiment?

Now back to the book itself. It is a stunner which corrects many of the mistakes which have crept into popular legend, combining contemporary eyewitness accounts — many previously obscure — with the results of recent archaeological surveys which at long last give a true, fully detailed picture. It is a fully complementary volume to *Zulu* (reviewed last month) and, although lacking the specially commissioned colour artwork, is an equally attractive book. It tells the story of the battle fairly from both sides, and even gives the subsequent life stories of the survivors — a fascinating series of accounts in themselves. The author lives in South Africa and does not just visit the battle sites about which he writes, but studies them in depth alongside contemporary accounts, photographs and paintings to ensure that his reconstructions of what actually took place during engagements usually full of confusion are as accurate as humanly possible. We have no hesitation in fully recommending this fine book.

# BOOK REVIEWS

**Osprey Men-at-Arms series, March publications: all 48pp p/bk, approx 40 b/w illus, 8 colour plates, £6.50.**

**MAA 255: *Armies of the Muslim Conquest* by David Nicolle, plates by Angus McBride.**

This title covers the period from the life of the Prophet (circa 570-632) to the Abbasid civil wars of the mid-9th century, and thus encompasses the whole period of Islam's vigorous expansion over the Arabian heartland, the Middle East, North Africa, parts of Central Asia and the Iberian Peninsula. It thus up-dates information covered in part in previous MAA titles, notably MAA 125 *Armies of Islam 7th-11th Centuries*, and usefully accompanies the subject matter of several others, eg, MAA 247 on Romano-Byzantine Armies of the 4th to 9th centuries. Basically chronological, the text is organised into an introduction and chronology, and chapters on The Prophet's First Warriors, The Age of Expansion, The Umayyad Caliphate, The Abbasid Revolution, and Dr Nicolle's usual full captions to the detailed and attractive colour plates painted by Mr McBride from his references. Army organisation, composition, arms and armour and tactics are described throughout; and the usual mixture of monochrome illustrations includes material on military architecture. A feature of the colour section is a full plate of no less than 40 flags from 7th century sources. Recommended.

**MAA 256: *The Irish Wars 1485-1603* by Ian Heath, plates by David Sque.**

A most readable and interesting text on a complex, fascinating and somewhat neglected subject. It is organised into a chronology and long, detailed chapters on all major aspects of the Irish and Anglo-Irish armies, with separate sections on tactics and cavalry. The monochrome illustrations are particularly interesting, drawn not only from Derricke but from a number of other early and highly relevant sources. Mr Sque's plates do justice to some very colourful and exotic costumes, quite unlike the familiar medieval images from the 'mainland'; this compensates for his apparent difficulties over ring-mail and plate armour, some of which looks distinctly odd. Original, intriguing, and recommended.

**MAA 257: *Napoleon's Campaigns in Italy* by P.J. Haythornthwaite, plates by Richard Hook.**

Unusual for the series in that the text is largely devoted to a chronological account, in some detail, of the campaigns and battles, illustrated with some maps and orders

of battle as well as the usual period prints, engravings and portraits. Uniform information is limited to the full commentaries to Mr Hook's plates. These latter are attractive and confident; an unusual feature is that the subjects are presented against pale colour-wash background tints rather than against white — this works well, particularly in the four plates of Austrian subjects, throwing the white uniforms into sharp relief. A mainstream subject, attractively handled by professionals.

**MAA 258: *Flags of the American Civil War (2) Union* by Philip Katcher, plates by Rick Scollins.**

This companion to MAA 252 is handled in exactly the same way, and there is little to add. It is a thorough, workmanlike manual to a mainstream subject, the text sensibly arranged and solidly founded on quoted period orders and descriptions of surviving examples and recorded variations. The monochrome illustrations are a mixture of photos of surviving flags, period engravings and interesting early photographs; and the plates, by the late Rick Scollins, illustrate 30 flags and two figures in colour. A thoroughly useful addition to any ACW bookshelf.

**Gentlemen's Sons** by Ian Fletcher and Ron Poulter. Spellmount; ISBN 0-873376-00-6; 250pp; 8pp colour plates; over 100 mono plates, maps & diags; bibliography & index; £25.00.

Sub-titled 'The Guards in the Peninsula and at Waterloo', this attractive book begins with a chapter on the Foot Guards themselves followed by two chapters on dress and campaign life — it was the sight of some Guardsmen holding umbrellas against the rain which provoked Wellington's remark about 'Gentlemen's Sons' and which gives the book its title. Subsequent chapters give a chronological account of the two campaigns, zeroing in on the role of the Guards.

Discipline, attention to detail and immaculate appearance were their hallmarks. They were unrivalled in esprit de corps and matched in fighting ability only by the Light Division. But the 'Gentlemen's Sons' were not given the name for nothing for, when it came to the composition of the officer corps, the Guards were certainly unrivalled. They came only from the higher echelons of society, since the high price of commissions meant that only the well-connected or titled could afford to join this socially exclusive military 'club'. But, although they may have been dandies, no-one can deny their fighting record.

This is an excellent study which

only suffers in the production quality of some of the mono plates, and can be recommended.

**High Flyers: 30 Reminiscences to Celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the RAF** edited by Michael Fopp. Greenhill Books in association with The Royal Air Force Museum; ISBN 1-85367-146-0; 253pp; 20pp mono plates; glossary; £15.95. This is not a history of the Royal Air Force, but a collection of reminiscences of flying experiences over the years by 30 men who have subsequently become celebrities. Nor are they all battle stories and, indeed, several of the most amusing and memorable anecdotes have little or nothing to do with war. What each does, though, is pinpoint some aspect of life in the RAF from the First World War onwards.

Novelists Frederick Forsyth and Gavin Lyall, comedians Michael Bentine and Lord Rix, television personalities Hughie Green, Cliff Michelmore, Kenneth Wolstenholme and Raymond Baxter, politicians Lord Tebbit and Tony Benn, scientists Lord Zuckermann and Sir Bernard Lovell, and other well-known public figures all tell their individual stories with gusto. Nor is the book altogether about flying, although the variety of aircraft types from Tiger Moths upwards which are included definitely give one a close feeling of 'being in the cockpit'. Although widely different, each account is thoroughly absorbing. It is not, therefore, an attempt to belittle to say that this book makes ideal bedtime reading — but it is.

**History of the War in the Peninsula and in the South of France from the Year 1807 to the Year 1814, Vols III & IV** by William F.P. Napier. Constable & Co Ltd; ISBNs 0-09-471860-1 & -471870-9; Vol III 651pp; Vol IV 589pp; maps & appendices; £19.95 each volume.

Following their reprints of Volumes I and II in Napier's classic studies of the Peninsula campaigns (see *MI*/53), Constable have now released the second pair of volumes with numbers V and VI to come in the autumn. Napier, who himself served with the 52nd Regiment of Foot from Corunna to the Pyrenees, brings a fund of first-hand experience to his narrative and his research during the years after the defeat of Napoleon before the first volume was originally published in 1828 included correspondence and conversations with men from other regiments.

Vol III covers events from June 1809 to May 1811, including the horrific siege of Badajoz. Vol IV covers the period from May 1811 to April 1812. The details, as readers of the first two books will know, is minute and this series cannot be too highly recommended.



# Robert E. Lee

Dr PRESTON RUSSELL

ADMIRER BY HIS enemies, loved by his men and adored by women, Robert E. Lee was a more complex man than many soldiers. Here a well known American historian and modeller examines his character and career.

ROBERT EDWARD LEE is a southern icon, proud and unassailable. In a photograph taken only eight days after his surrender at Appomattox, Matthew Brady captures a man who has tasted the bitterness of defeat. A noble fire lighting his eyes, Lee looks directly into the camera, and beyond. His reputation is now protected by a fortress of facts, lore and idolatry beyond human frailty. The unknowable Marble Man, as biographers have labelled him.

But it was not always so for 'Marse Robert'.

Known for his systematic caution before taking field command, early detractors snickered at 'Granny Lee'. Some laughed louder than others, such as Lee's Union opponent, George B. McClellan: '(Lee) is too cautious & weak under grave responsibility — personally brave and energetic to a fault, he yet is wanting in moral firmness when pressed by heavy responsibility & is likely to be timed & irresolute in action'. Events would prove McClellan had written an insightful description, not of Lee, but of himself.

In spite of being born a Virginia blue blood, Lee had to live down the disgrace of his family name. His father, Henry 'Light Horse Harry' Lee, was a dashing cavalry commander during the American Revolution. He eulogised his friend Washington's most enduring epitaph: 'First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen'. Although a congressman and Governor of Virginia, Henry Lee was also a land schemer and womaniser — his excesses supported by the fortunes of two wives before he landed in debtor's prison. His son Henry (Robert's half-brother), matched his father's conduct and exceeded it with a sexual scandal, sufficient to wind up an outcast in Europe, with 'Black Horse Harry' added to the family roster. When Robert later married the wealthy

great-grand daughter of Martha Washington, he was sharply eyed as yet 'another' Lee.

Robert had wanted to become a doctor, but chose the US Military Academy at West Point because it was free. Fresh out as an officer of engineers, Lee's first assignment in 1829 was to begin construction of a massive coastal fort near Savannah, Georgia. There he fell in love. Writing to Savannahian Eliza MacKay from Fort Pulaski, Lee implored, 'It did grieve me to see the Boats coming down one after another without any of those little comforts which are so necessary to me. Oh me! But you will send some sometimes, will you not Sweet--? How I will besiege the P. office.' Lee would return to Savannah many times. An old Savannah friend recalled a dinner party after the Mexican War: 'Bob Lee. I do not find him at all changed — he runs on just as he used to. He made me laugh very heartily and laughed himself until the tears ran down his face.'

From youth to old age, women directed a furtive eye toward the officer described as 'the handsomest man in the army'. Although Lee was faithful to his wife, she had a difficult personality, compounded by becoming an early invalid, just as his mother had been. Since his father tended to abandon his crippled mother, nursing became part of Robert's nature — including being seen from childhood to his last years with a shopping basket on his arm to and from market. However, neither his wife's condition nor his lengthy absences on military duty prevented the Lees from having seven children and a full domestic life. Not that there wasn't occasional confusion; after one two-year absence of duty, Lee returned home to embrace his growing brood. 'Where is my little boy?', he enthused over his namesake third son — as he mistakenly



smothered a visiting playmate in his arms.

After the war, Lee was retired or embarrassed by the daily adulation thrust at his feet by students or veterans (often one and the same) when he was President of Washington College in Lexington, Virginia. However when the flattery came from attractive women a fraction his age, Lee suddenly became chatty and oozing with charm. One incident in Lexington is revealing, where Lee typically rode through the streets like a sublime statue, his equally statuesque horse, Traveller, 'not looking to right or left'. Once, however, Traveller was seen theatrically pawing the ground and prancing — as Lee just happened to be engaging two blushing local girls in small talk. From across the street an observer noted that Lee was secretly producing this stagecraft by 'a dexterous and coquettish use of the spur'. Lee became even more childish when in the presence of little girls. He typically initi-

*Photograph of Lee by Mathew Brady taken barely a week after Appomattox in Richmond, Virginia. Lee initially refused to pose for this picture. (Library of Congress.)*

ated play — even with rag dolls or 'doll babies'. As his son Rob described, 'These were his special delight, and he followed them around, talking baby talk to them and getting them to talk to him'.

It was during the Mexican War in 1846 that Lee began to stand out from his West Point contemporaries by incredible feats of reconnaissance and artillery logistics. He soon became the pet of commander Winfield Scott, who called Lee 'the best soldier in Christendom'. With the help of Lieutenants George B. McClellan and P.G.T. Beauregard, Colonel Lee somehow manoeuvred cannon over impossible terrain to aid in Scott's conquest of Mexico City. The aged Duke of Wellington felt Scott's feat 'unsurpassed in military





Henry 'Light Horse Harry' Lee in his definitive portrait by Charles Wilson Peale. Lee is wearing the uniform of his renowned Lee's Legion during the American Revolution. (Independence National Historic Park, Philadelphia.)

annals. He is the greatest living soldier.' Lee was less enthused by America's aggression in Mexico. 'We have bullied her. For that I am ashamed.' As an Aide de Camp, Lee once had to correct a Lieutenant Ulysses S. Grant for not showing up in regulation dress uniform at the headquarters of 'Old Fuss and Feathers' Scott.

After serving a pleasant three years with his family as the Superintendent of West Point, in 1855 Lee was assigned to the US cavalry in Texas. Secretary of War Jefferson Davis formed two mounted regiments to attempt marginal order in this vast wild domain won from Mexico. Duty consisted of chasing hostiles and desperados over a trackless moon-scape. 'My rattlesnake, my only pet, is dead', he wrote to his daughter. 'He grew sick and would not eat his frogs and died one night.' The dust

storms clogged his pen and the 110 degree temperatures dried up his ink.

When home on leave in 1859, Lee was hurriedly put over a detachment of US Marines to retake an arsenal in Harper's Ferry, Virginia — seized by the bloody Abolitionist, John Brown. Considered a martyred saint by the north and terrorist fiend by the south, Lee believed Brown to be 'an honest, conscientious old man'. Lee returned to Texas with little comprehension of the first spark of the holocaust.

But the slaughter time had come. After Fort Sumter was fired on, President Lincoln (on the unqualified recommendation of Winfield Scott, now too aged and obese to even mount a horse), offered Lee command of the Union army at the start of the Civil War. 'I had to meet the question whether I should take part against my native state,' he wrote to his brother. Lee chose Virginia. As he walked away from the flag he had served for 35 years, a former student from West Point asked his old Superintendent, 'Are you not well, Colonel Lee?' 'Well in body, but not in mind,' he answered. After a sleepless,

prayerful night at Arlington, his wife's mansion on the Potomac, Lee turned in his resignation. The home was then occupied by Union troops, soon turned into a national cemetery so it could never be lived in again.

Four bloody years later, a resplendent but stunned Lee sat in the home of Wilmer McLean in tiny Appomattox, Virginia. Before him sat his conqueror, a mud-spattered U.S. Grant. On the ride there Lee noticed still sporadic gunfire during the truce. 'How easily I could be rid of this and be at rest. I have only to ride along the line and all will be over,' he wondered aloud. 'But it is our duty to live.' Now in McLean's parlour, it was Grant who seemed reluctant to bring up the business at hand, attempting small talk about the weather and their meeting in Mexico. A diffident Lee politely admitted he could not remember Grant... 'I have often tried to recollect how you looked, but I have never been able to recall a single feature'. After a strained interval of such awkward deference, one Union officer whispered to another, 'Who's surrendering here, anyhow?' It was Lee who came to the point. 'I suppose, General Grant, that the object of our present meeting is fully understood... the surrender of my army'.

Grant's terms were generous by any standard. Lee's troops were to disarm and go home, not to be molested if they obeyed the law. Officers could keep their sidearms and horses. Emergency rations for 25,000 troops were extended to Lee's remnants, the precise number not known because of recent heavy losses and desertions. But Lee had one last request; could the enlisted artillerymen and cavalry keep their personal mounts for spring ploughing as well? Grant stuck to the written agreement as Lee re-read it, regretfully conceding, 'No, I see the terms do not allow it; that is clear'. But, as historian Douglas Southall Freeman assesses Grant's next move: 'one of the noblest of his qualities, and surely one of the surest signs of his greatness — he did not humiliate Lee by forcing him to make a direct plea for a modification of terms that were generous'. Grant allowed Lee's request by issuing a verbal order that allowed all Confederates to take their personal horses home. With palpable appreciation Lee responded, 'This will have the best possible effect upon the

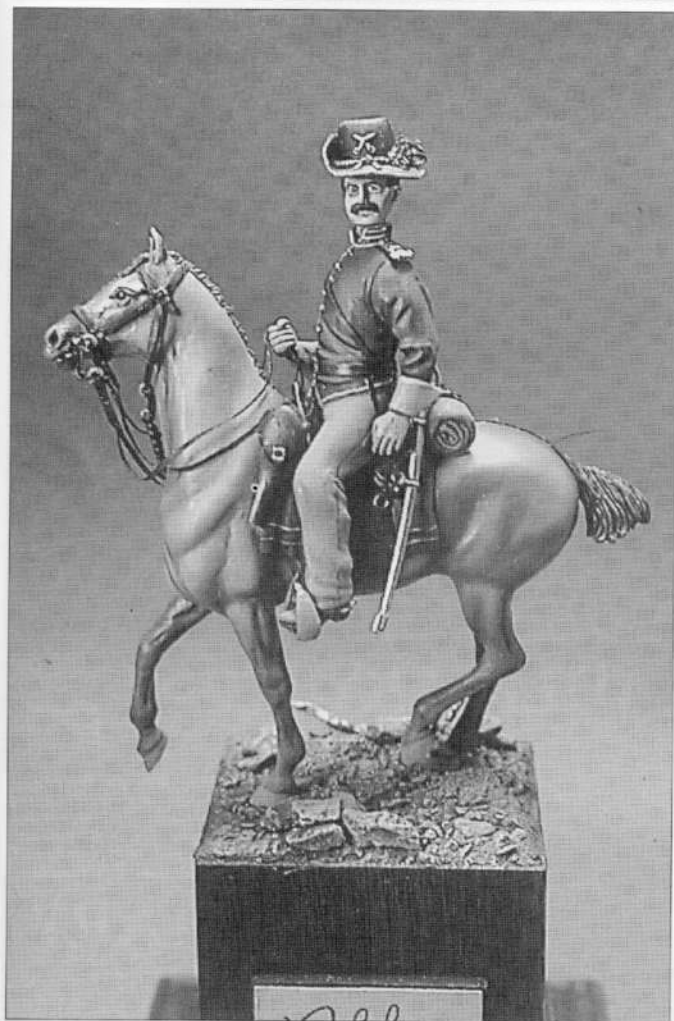
men. It will be very gratifying and will do much toward conciliating our people.'

The formalities over, Lee paused in the hallway, thinking himself unseen. But a Union officer noticed he was having a physical reaction, breaking out in 'a deep crimson flush, that rising from his neck overspread his face and even tinged his broad forehead'. He exited onto the porch, exchanged a few mechanical salutes, then stood at a loss looking about, finally crying 'Orderly! Orderly!' in a hoarse voice. As Sergeant G.W. Tucker fumbled to replace Traveller's bridle while the horse tried to eat more grass, Lee waited and smote his right fist in his left palm 'in an absent sort of way'. He then lifted Traveller's forelock from under the brow band, smoothed and patted it, and slowly mounted. As he did so, 'there broke unguarded from his lips a long, low, deep sigh, almost a groan in its intensity, while the flush on his neck seemed, if possible, to take on a still deeper hue'.

Returning to his own lines, his men began to spot him. A cheer here or there stood frozen by the occasion and Lee's shattered appearance. Soldiers began to gather, then flood around him. Seeing tears streaking his face, they patted Traveller or touched Lee's boot. Some grasped his hand and walked along for a few steps like a child beside his father. Mistaking the constant touches for yet another victory ovation, Traveller briefly pranced amid the tears. Lee's eyes fixed a line between Traveller's ears while his lips attempted a soundless 'Goodbye'. A few offered hollow assurances of 'we'll go after 'em again'. But a soldier from North Carolina captured it all, as he hurled down his weapon. 'Blow, Gabriel, Blow. My God, let him blow, for I am ready to die.'

After the war Lee had nothing to do, trained only as a soldier and now with no livelihood — also threatened with a national trial for high treason. It was stopped by Grant, on the threat of his own resignation (but Lee's US citizenship would not be restored until 1975). Lee felt himself a useless pariah, the personification of a failed cause. But offers came his way, like a free estate in England or fortunes just for the use of his name. On turning down one such proposal from an insurance company, he replied, 'Do you not think that if my name is worth fifty thou-





Lee in the US Cavalry in barren south Texas in 1855. It is not known how this regulation uniform was modified for survival in the dusty oven-like conditions.

sand dollars a year, I ought to be very careful about taking care of it?' For \$1,500 a year Lee accepted the presidency of Washington College — bankrupt, with a faculty of four and student body of 40. It was his way to use the time left him to help rebuild the south and reunite the nation... 'I have led the young men of the south in battle; I have seen many of them die on the field; I shall devote my remaining energies to training young men to do their duty in life'. That he surely did. Washington College is now the renowned Washington and Lee University.

Five years later Lee was dead, beginning even before Gettysburg to notice 'a pain in my chest, along the heart bone, ever present when I walk or make any exertion'. In 1870, rising to give the dinner blessing in his home at Washington College, no words came forth. He sat down awkwardly with a look of resignation his family had never seen. 'I saw he had

taken leave of earth', his wife Mary recalled. Lapsing into coma over a week, she remembered his delirious words as 'he wandered to those dreadful battlefields'. Toward the last he cried out, 'Tell Hill he must come up!' His final words were 'Strike the tent'.

Only days after Appomattox Lee had written to his cousin, 'We must be resigned to necessity, and submit ourselves to the will of a merciful God as cheerfully as in prosperity'.

### THE FIGURES

The 90mm figure of an older Lee is by Series 77, with significant modification of the head and body with epoxy putty. A stickler for neatness (note the well polished shoes), Lee still holds the West Point record for not receiving a single demerit. But he dressed more simply than his fellow officers, not even wearing the complete minor details of his full rank. When inspecting Fort Pulaski at the beginning of the war, a defender noted, 'We were visited the other day by Gens. Lee, Lawton and Mercer and a good many other little puffs. Gen. Lee was dressed very plainly while his inferiors were dressed within an inch of their

lives.' With the few military designations removed, Lee wore this coat as President of Washington College, renamed Washington and Lee after his death. (No Confederate military buttons were allowed under Reconstruction, unless covered by black cloth, soon called mourning buttons.) That he wears no sword or yellow sash in Brady's photo is explained by Lee's mood — he didn't want his picture taken. 'It is utterly impossible, Mister Brady. How can I sit for a photograph with the eyes of the world upon me as they are today?'

Relenting after his wife interceded, he sat through six photos on the back porch of his rented house in Richmond. He entertained no conversation. In two prints his long thinning locks on the side of his head stick out like wings, presumably from removing his hat. Doubtless Brady dared not tell his sullen subject to recomb his hair.

The two 54mm mounted fig-

ures of a younger Lee and his father are massive putty conversions using Historex and Airfix parts. The uniform details for 'Light Horse Harry' come from his portrait by Charles Willson Peale, while his son is in US regulation cavalry dress from 1855 to 1860. Beside Lee in Texas slithers his pet rattlesnake, faithfully bounding along (for a snake) on his master's appointed rounds... but perhaps I only imagined this. **MI**

### REFERENCES

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Acknowledgement to Captain Robert Peniston, Director of Lee Chapel Museum, Washington and Lee University.

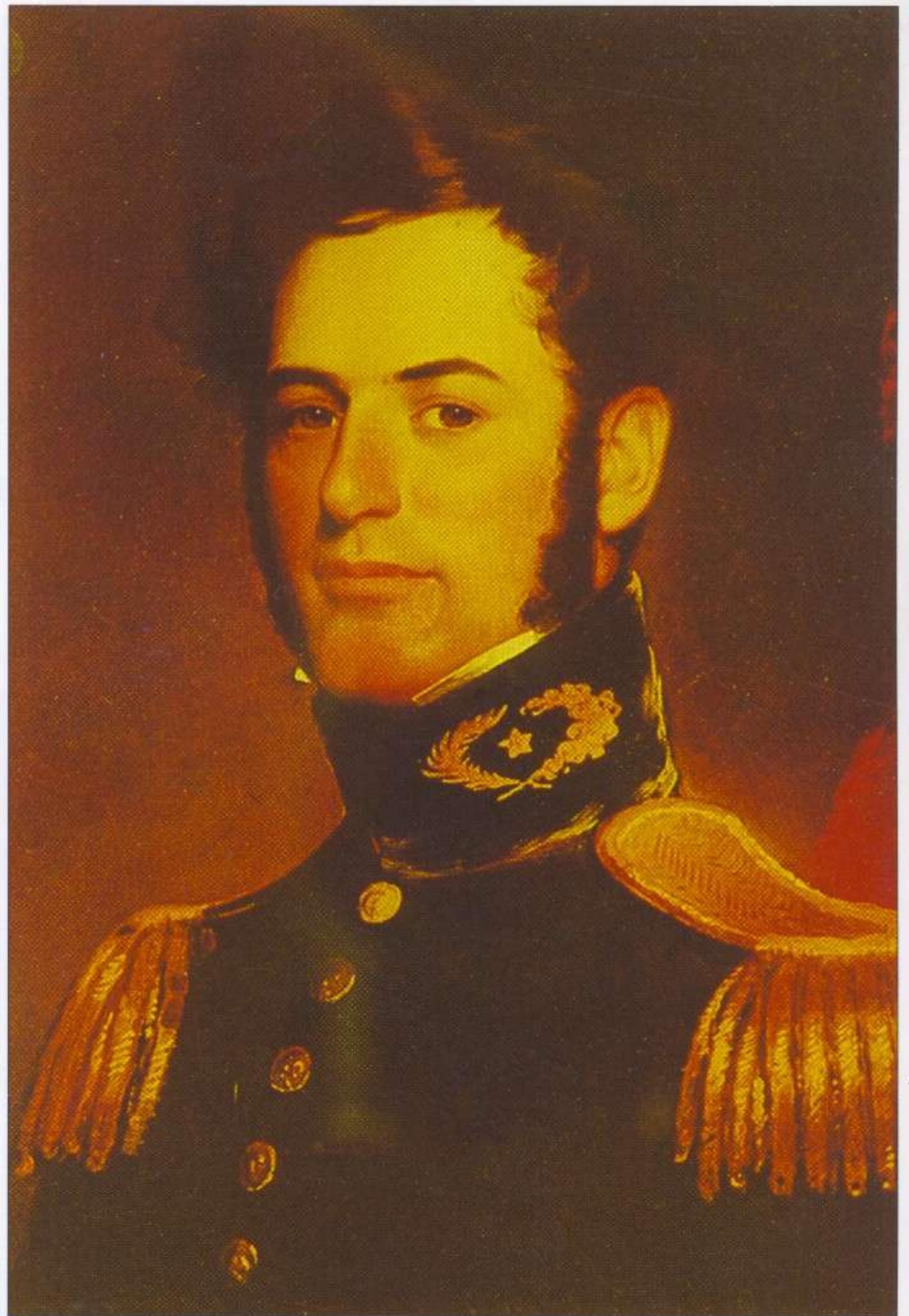
Modified miniature of Lee by Series 77, based on the Brady photograph.





# Robert E. Lee

*Robert E. Lee as a young officer of engineers painted in 1838 at age 31. This is a likeness of one called 'the handsomest man in the army'. (Washington and Lee University.)*



*Lee painted in the 1850s as Superintendent of the US Military Academy at West Point. In less than ten years, his hair was grey. (Washington and Lee University.)*

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